

Morality and Television:

Exploring the moral content of
prime time television

Serena Daalmans

Morality and Television:

Exploring the moral content of
prime time television

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
op gezag van de rector magnificus prof. dr. J.H.J.M van Krieken,
volgens besluit van het college van decanen
in het openbaar te verdedigen op donderdag 8 december 2016
om 10.30 uur precies

door

ISBN

978-94-028-0371-6

Cover

Roy Soetekouw

Design/lay-out

Promotie In Zicht, Arnhem

Print

Ipskamp Printing, Enschede

Serena Daalmans

geboren op 11 oktober 1984
te Maastricht

Copyright © Serena Daalmans

All rights reserved. No parts of this publication may be reported or transmitted,
in any form or by any means, without permission of the author

Promotor

Prof. dr. F.P.J. Wester

Copromotor

Dr. E.J.S. Hijmans

Manuscriptcommissie

Prof. dr. P.L.H. Scheepers

Prof. dr. M.A. Buijzen

Prof. dr. A.J.M. van den Hoogen

Dr. A.L. Eden (*Michigan State University, East Lansing, Verenigde Staten*)

Dr. A.F.M. Krijnen (*Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam*)

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction and theoretical overview	9
1.1	Introduction	11
1.2	Media theory and morality	15
1.3	Previous studies on morality and television	18
1.3.1	Morality and television: Media effects studies	18
1.3.2	Morality and television: Content analytical studies	21
1.4	Research overview, objectives, and research questions	25
1.5	Outline of the dissertation	28
Chapter 2	‘One Night of Prime Time’: An explorative study of morality in one night of prime time television	31
2.1	Introduction	33
2.2	Theoretical background	34
2.3	Research goals and research questions	36
2.4	Method	36
2.4.1	Sample and procedures	36
2.4.2	Morality as sensitizing concept	37
2.5	Results	39
2.6	Discussion	46
Chapter 3	Elaborating instruments for assessing morality in different television genres	51
3.1	Introduction	53
3.2	Coding morality: commercials as a testcase	54
3.2.1	Layered messages on the Good Life	56
3.2.2	Casting: Messages of moral worth	56
3.2.3	Commercial subject and life domains	58
3.2.4	Values	58
3.3	Lessons learned, aspects of morality (theoretically) defined	60
3.4	Looking ahead: exploring variations in morality on television	65
Chapter 4	Exploring the moral content of television fiction over time 1980-2010	71
4.1	Introduction	73
4.2	Changing society, changing morality: an institutional take on morality	74
4.3	Morality and the plot of prime time fiction	77
4.4	Method	80
4.4.1	Sample	80
4.4.2	Codebook and coding procedures	80
4.4.3	Coder training and reliability	83
4.5	Results	84
4.6	Discussion	89
4.7	Limitations and directions for future research	92

Chapter 5	The good, the bad and the ambivalent? Analyzing the moral nature of fiction characters over time (1985-2010)	95
5.1	Introduction	97
5.2	Theoretical frame and research questions	99
5.3	Method	102
5.3.1	Sample	102
5.3.2	Codebook and coding procedures	103
5.3.3	Coder training and reliability	105
5.4	Results	106
5.5	Discussion	116
5.6	Limitations and directions for future research	119
Chapter 6	The many faces of television's public moral discourse? Exploring genre differences in the representation of morality in prime time television.	123
6.1	Introduction	125
6.2	Theoretical frame and research questions	126
6.3	Method	131
6.3.1	Sample	131
6.3.2	Codebook and coding procedures	131
6.3.3	Coder training and reliability	134
6.4	Results	134
6.5	Discussion	142
6.6	Limitations and directions for future research	145
Chapter 7	From good to bad, and everything in between: An analysis of genre differences in the representation of moral nature	149
7.1	Introduction	151
7.2	Theoretical frame and research questions	152
7.3	Method	155
7.3.1	Sample	155
7.3.2	Codebook and coding procedures	155
7.3.3	Coder training and reliability	158
7.4	Results	159
7.5	Discussion	170
Chapter 8	Summary, conclusion and discussion	177
8.1	Introduction	179
8.2	Summary of research and findings	181
8.3	Conclusion and discussion	186
8.4	Methodological reflection, limitations and directions for future research	190

References	197
Appendices	215
I. Through the looking glass	217
II. Codebook Morality and television fiction	243
III. Codebook Morality and television genres	257
IV. Additional tables Chapter 4 & 5	271
V. Additional tables Chapter 6 & 7	281
Nederlandse samenvatting	293
Dankwoord	303
Curriculum Vitae	305

1

CHAPTER

Introduction and theoretical overview

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation is focused on media and morality; more specifically it is centered on the central role television holds as a cultural institution in contemporary society when it comes to morality. This particular subject immediately sparks (at least) two questions. One might firstly ask, why television still matters as a topic of research in contemporary society, where the internet and social media are seemingly at the forefront of contemporary media research. Nevertheless, research has shown that we still consume a lot of television in the Netherlands. We watch often and a lot, more specifically in 2015 Dutch viewer watch an average of 190 minutes of television a day (Stichting Kijkonderzoek, 2015). Contrary to expectations television viewing time has not decreased as a result of the introduction of the internet. However, people have started to media-multi task, which is using smart phones, laptops or tablet while watching television (or using other forms of media)(Onkenhout, 2013). These results are also reported in a European study which surveyed nine countries in the regions North-Central, Eastern and Mediterranean Europe. The so-called “highly synchronous” media, like television and radio, were still found to be the media types that the most time was devoted to, even though the intensity and hours of use for many-to-many media practices (i.e. Web 2.0, forums, chat rooms and online games) does increase (Nimrod, Adoni & Nossek, 2015). All in all, it seems that research into television is still highly relevant.

Secondly, one might ask: Why the subject of morality? The relationship between television and morality in the public opinion is rather contested. In public debates this relationship is often seen in very negative terms due to the fact that public opinion scapegoats the media, and television in particular, for various social ills (Biltereyst, 2004; Krijnen, 2007; Lind & Rarick, 1992; Tavener, 2000). The idea that the attitudes, values and behaviors of the public could be malignantly altered by television, started from a highbrow assertion that it affected how people thought and that it limited “their reflective and critical faculties as against a culture based on reading” (Dant, 2012, p.12). The discourse surrounding televisions immoral influence in society then moved to target specific societal problems, for example the sexualization of the young, proliferation of violence, and materialism (Warner, 1987). The prevalence of television as a subject of collective mistrust and disfavor is most likely a reflection of the pervasive presence of the medium in our homes and its ascribed authority as a socializing agent. And it is in its role as central socializing agent in our society, that the scientific community sees its function in the reproduction of morality (Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2013; Smith, Smith, Pieper, Yoo, Ferris, Downs, & Bowden, 2006).

To thoroughly anchor the relationship between television and the reproduction of morality as the theoretical foundation of this dissertation, we will first outline the association between morality, society and culture. In doing this we will build on the work of Durkheim (1933, 1982, 1995, 2002), who was one of the founding fathers of sociology as a scientific discipline. In this line of thinking, morality is then per definition a historical and societal product. In that, each society over time creates its own set of moral rules and principles that are more or less adequate to its existential needs. As a result morality is closely tied to society's continued existence in time.

Moral rules are thus rooted in society as a social fact, "they are external to the individual and invested with a coercive power that the individual cannot deny, i.e. these rules have the power to control the thoughts, acts and feelings of individuals" (Durkheim, 1982, p.52). As Durkheim asserts: morality is a social phenomenon, a social fact, which should be studied as such. Members of society not only make, but also share the rules and principles that guide behavior; they also share knowledge of the world they collectively inhabit. The way we know the world we live in is dependent on the human representation of it. This means that the world exists only in so far as it is represented by what Durkheim calls: '*représentations collectives*' (Durkheim, 1995). These are the ways in which a society transmits collective experiences that embody and express the reality of a society's collective existence (Carls, n.d.). This is where the media take an active part, because these representations may take a number of cultural forms including, myths, religions, imagery, photo's, film and television. This is why shared knowledge of the world, or culture, plays such an important role in the maintenance of social order as a moral order. The order that protects and maintains societies and the reality of people living in it by legitimizing plausibility structures (Berger, 1969).

As we will show, this lead has been taken up more or less explicitly by scholars who study the relation of media and society, such as Carey, Gerbner and more recently Couldry, who echo the above mentioned conceptions. The cohesive function of the media, as assumed in the cultural tradition of communication science (Baran & Davis, 2015; Carey, 1975, 1989; McQuail, 2000), points directly to the moral '*représentations collectives*' and its power to preserve society in time, although explicit references to morality are seldom found. For Durkheim, society's collective force is made visible in religion and religious practices. Therefore, now that religion gradually has retreated from public life in a secularized modernized society such as ours, the general question underlying our research objective is if television's representations of the world we live in have taken over all, or some of religion's moral power.

Our perspective on the role of television and the reproduction of the moral order lies within the cultural tradition of communication science. Media function as a mirror of what is happening in society and what is seen as valuable and important, simultaneously the media also function as a forum in which current events and shifts in society might be discussed and reflected upon (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983, 1984). This may be elaborated as follows. Every individual, but also every social group, organization, or societal institution deals with considerations about what is seen as good, valuable and praiseworthy behavior in everyday life, as much as it deals with what is seen as bad, criminal and objectionable behavior that should be avoided or even punished. In our differentiated society continuous discussions about these norms and values are articulated within for example the political debate, the scientific community, professions and religious groups. These discussions are widely represented in the media, but for society as a whole these essentially moral discussions are the most easily accessible and consumed via its most central storytelling medium: television.

Television as a communication medium thus has great significance in our society due to its mimetic properties as well as the fact that it is ubiquitous, cheap, requires no literacy, and is virtually accessible to all (Dant, 2012; Gerbner, 2002). What sets television apart from other sources that participate in the assumed reproduction of the moral order is that it transcends traditional barriers of mobility, class and literacy, and through its pervasive presence it has become the primary common source of socialization and everyday information of otherwise heterogeneous masses of people (Gerbner, 2002). This means that television presents us, for the first time since preindustrial religion, with a daily ritual that is shared by all, regardless of class, age, gender or other socio-cultural markers. Television as a daily ritual has taken up a central role in our daily lives: when children enter kindergarten, their first exposure to an institution in the public sphere, they are already experienced viewers with countless hours of viewing under their belt (Morgan, 2007).

From cradle to grave it penetrates nearly every home in the land. Unlike newspapers and magazines, television does not require literacy. Unlike the movies, it runs continuously, and once purchased, costs almost nothing. Unlike radio, it can show as well as tell. Unlike the theatre or movies, it does not require leaving your home. With virtually unlimited access, television both precedes literacy and, increasingly, preempts it (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p.42).

Following this line of thinking, the function of television lies, quite similar to religion, in the endless repetition of stories that define the world as it is and legitimize the current moral order, it functions as a plausibility structure. Like religion, the ritualized communication processes incorporated in television

engage in the maintenance of an ordered and meaningful cultural world. Gerbner (1979) once remarked that the only thing that sets religion and television apart as cultural storytelling institutions in society is the dedication which people reserve for television viewing. He stated “most people watch television as they used to attend church except that they watch television more religiously” (Gerbner, 1979, p.216). What sets television apart from other electronic media types, is that it has the ability to show *and* tell its viewers what the consequences are of certain behaviors are, and as such can be said to function as a mirror as well as a cultural forum in which a society’s mores, norms and values and general ways of acting and being in the world are represented as well as discussed (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983, 1984).

Newcomb and Hirsch propose a vision of television as an expressive medium that, through its storytelling functions unites and examines a culture. Their view focuses on the collective, cultural view of the social construction and negotiation of reality, on what Carey refers to as ‘public thought’. Similar to Carey, they understand the medium as a cultural ritual process, following Victor Turner’s insights on liminality, “to capture the ‘in between space’ when one is neither totally in nor out of society. When rules may be broken or bent, when roles may be reversed, categories overturned” (1983, p. 563). They state that it is through their arts that contemporary complex societies examine themselves. This may be seen in all kinds of performative genres that assume the task of ‘plural cultural reflexivity’. These genres offer a “metalanguage, a way of understanding of who and what we are, how values and attitudes are adjusted, how meaning shifts” (1983, p.564). The view on television as a cultural forum thus recognizes a range of interpretations of television content. As they argued: “We are far more concerned with the ways television contributes to change than with mapping the obvious ways in which it maintains dominant viewpoints” (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983, p.571). Instead of a monolithic, uniform message, as in the case of Gerbner’s ‘hidden curriculum’ (2002), Newcomb and Hirsch opt for the much broader perspective of television as a forum in which the messages of television are complex, as contradictory and confused, similar to the culture it is reflective of. The television messages within the cultural forum thus will reflect the themes and discussions of a morally differentiated society, in the process of negotiating reality.

When conceptualizing television as in one way or another having taken over the moral power of religion, as a mirror of a unified message system or as a forum for the previously mentioned societal moral discussions, reflecting different moralities, this prompts the question: *What does television show and tell us in relation to morality?*

Based on the complex relation of morality and contemporary society and the function that media, and television, have in Western societies, this study is then interested in what ways television represents morality.

1.2 Media theory and Morality

To assess which aspects or conceptualizations of morality might be important to incorporate in the current study, we will first outline the theoretical relationship between morality and the media and morality and television from several vantage points.

Media and morality are encountered in several guises within the communication science traditions. The first tradition states that via the media viewers can become “armchair global travelers”, subjected to and immersed in signs, symbols and discourses about their own as well as foreign cultures (Barker, 1999). In this manner the media connect us with distant (suffering) others and point us to our (shared) moral responsibilities, when it comes to problems close to home but also far away (Boltanski, 1999; Chouliarakis, 2013; Tester, 2001). These responsibilities towards others are made explicit; by for example gatherings like *Live Aid*, *Band Aid* and the *MTV Exit* campaign (Arthurs, 2009; Tester, 2001; Silverstone, 2006). A form of “*mediatised solidarity*” has emerged in which values are shared through the media which communicates enough common ground to connect members of societies, not necessarily as a single coherent group but as various subgroups, with some values shared across subgroups” (Dant, 2012, p.47). By representing these instances as well as portraying the suffering of distant others, the media highlight social situations that need a moral answer, moral dialogue and reflexivity. As such these moral issues refer to the idea of media as a cultural forum as they become part of the media agenda and the public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). From this tradition we may conclude that morality is aligned here by means of television to everyday ethics (“do the right thing”), as an individual responsibility or duty to care for others.

Another tradition within communication science and media sociology is based on the aforementioned Durkheimian idea of societal cohesion and connectedness of the individual within the community, as a moral community. In Durkheimian thought morality begins when an individual belongs to a group. Not only does the individual belong to a group, but also to the world at large, for which the process of communication conceived as rituals is central (Becker, 1995; Carey, 1989; Couldry, 2003, 2012; Dayan & Katz, 1994). Within the ritual view of communication the media are conceptualized as platforms whose content reflects the process of a culture thinking about itself and contributing to shared knowledge of the world.

The media work toward the maintenance of society; “not (solely) in the act of imparting information but in the representation of shared beliefs” (Carey, 1989, p.23). Ritual communication thus holds the symbolic power that binds us together, and articulates a shared definition of reality and shared meanings as the base of culture and a structured society. This idea is also present in the work of Couldry (2003, 2012), of Wuthnow (1987) and indirectly also within the work of Durkheim and his ‘représentations collectives’. According to Couldry, who readily cites Carey as his source (2012, p.65), those who can define reality have power.

The idea of mediated rituals is further expanded upon by Couldry (2003, 2012). He argues that the media, and particularly television and the press are vital in structuring social life; they convey the feeling of interconnectedness with others with whom we share a social world. The media hereby function as ‘rituals’, as a mechanism that functions as a ‘stand-in’ for something greater than ourselves (Couldry, 2003, p.2-3). This transcendent dimension, beyond the experiences of daily life, directly relates to Durkheim’s conceptualization of the ‘représentations collectives’ and religion as a system of ideas and categorizations through which every individual can imagine the interconnectedness with one another in shared social world (Couldry, 2003, p.6). Media rituals help and more importantly legitimize the idea that, according to Couldry (2003, p.2), the ‘myth’ that *the media form the gateway to a societal shared space*. Couldry also calls this, “the hidden shaping of the social through media” (2012, p.29). A thought that recurs in Gerbner’s hidden curriculum as well.

As argued before, Carey (1989) also explicitly links the media and ritual communication, as the symbolic power that binds us together. Wuthnow (1987) approaches the ritual view of communication in a slightly different manner. Wuthnow links everyday social practices, interaction processes, with the way society is structured. Which might be interesting as television mediates interactions of real or fictitious characters. Furthermore, he makes an explicit connection with morality, when he states: “... *the communication of information about morally binding obligations on which social interaction depends, this is the moral order, it consists of a matrix of moral obligations*” (p.13). When these ideas are applied to studying mediated representations, culture and its morality becomes visible in “*symbolic-expressive messages implicit in the ways social life is arranged, in rituals, choice of words. What is ‘given off’ may be as important as what is ‘given’*” (p.14). And it is precisely this symbolic dimension (‘what is given off’), which makes studying media rituals notoriously difficult. This is because it is focused on that which can uplift us, in line with Durkheim, out of everyday life and connect us with society and the collective ‘we’ (Couldry, 2003, 2012). This means that the conceptualization of morality in television representations must focus on the symbolic content that refers to an underlying structure of morality.

The relationship between morality and the structural changes in (late-) modern society, complicates the outlined relationship between media and morality. Late-modern society can be characterized by structural changes resulting in pluralisation, detraditionalization and individualization. Combined with secularization as the continuous breaking down of religious plausibility structures of meaning and the consequences for the concomitant order (Berger, 1973), it is sometimes implied that this results in the absence of a collectively shared overarching moral framework (Morrison, Kieran, Svennevig & Ventress, 2007). However, whether this qualifies as a moral void remains to be seen in our research. The question is how the possible alienation of traditional society and morality, interferes with the assumed symbolic reproduction of the social and moral order.

Some scholars propose that with the arrival of electronic media, the moral order is now reproduced and distributed across a wider space and time and reaches more people within as well as beyond the nation-state society that Durkheim (1933, 2002) once described and theorized. In contemporary society, the media thus have become an important source of information on how to live a good life, a morally just life, through the large-scale dissemination of certain norms and values (Dant, 2012; Gerbner, 1998; Hawkins, 2001). This obviously rings true, but the exact nature of this moral order, of ‘certain norms and values’, still remains unclear.

This view of the relationship between media and morality in late-modern society ties in with the theoretical notions put forth by Giddens (1991) about modernization. He argued that the media have become a fundamental source in the construction of identity in a society that is characterized by detraditionalization and individualization. Individualization changes the relationship of the individual to the community and its central values. Autonomy is now a task for the individual to achieve. With the growing secularization, the moral foundation of society has become individualized, however the need for guidance and specific directives remains and has arguably increased because of permanent reflexivity and individual responsibility for life choices. This goes hand in hand with detraditionalization, which actually does not imply a total lack of tradition in society, but a changing function and place of traditions in the social order (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994, vi). Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994, p.3-4) characterize our time as one of *reflexive modernization*: the transition from a relatively ordered industrial society to a modern, globalized society with a loose structure that includes fundamental insecurities, risks and conflicts. Media assist modern men in their quest for meaning in a restless and open world of uncertainty (e.g. ‘risk society’). This reflects what role the media in general and television in particular may play in late-modern society, not only for those individuals looking for sources to aid them

in their search for meaning and self-fashioning of identity, but also in the representation of this search and its moral dilemmas in television content itself, as a reflection of the permanent reflexivity modernization theory assumes.

When reflecting on the field of media theory as outlined above, we must conclude that these theories do not explicitly deal with or conceptualize morality as a concept. Morality is mostly implied on an abstract level, when considering the relationship between media and society, as well as within the religious-like role television is ascribed in the reproduction of the social order by means of communicating a shared reality. We can also conclude that there is a certain tension between the various visions on the form morality actually takes on in media content. On the one hand, some propagate the vision that there is a repetitive, uniform and conservative message that is a hidden curriculum of television's message system as a whole (Gerbner, 1998). On the other hand, there is the vision proposed by Newcomb and Hirsch (1983, 1984), which emphasizes a differentiated society, plurality, and cultural reflexivity in order to capture the moral plurality and cultural change within television as a cultural forum. From this exploration of theories of media and morality, we now move on towards an overview of existing empirical research on the relationship between morality and television, and what insights it might offer us on this relationship.

1.3 Previous studies on morality and television

The study of morality in television content has mostly been dealt with by scholars in an indirect manner, with studies focused on topics of moral (societal) concern (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013). This is perhaps most evident in the extensive research conducted on sexual and violent media content, but extends to other areas as well. Previous research about morality and television has been conducted from both a media-effects perspective as well as a content-analytical perspective. The studies focused on morality and television from a media-effects perspective, have described, analyzed and explained how certain types of television content affect its viewers, while the content-analytical studies have focused on describing and analyzing the moral content of specific television content. Research from both of these perspectives will be discussed consecutively.

1.3.1 Morality and television: media-effects studies

In the evaluation of the media effects paradigm in relation to morality and television content, two theoretical frameworks and research stand out: *Affective Disposition Theory* (ADT) and the *Model of Intuitive Morality and Exemplars* (MIME).

Affective Disposition Theory and the enjoyment of (im)moral media characters

The most prominent theoretical framework used by media psychologists in the last decades in studying the relation of moral content – and specifically the moral behavior of persons and characters – and its consequences (for entertainment) has been the *Affective Disposition Theory* (ADT) (Zillmann, 2000; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). This theory states that whether we like or dislike characters or media persons – how we form our dispositions towards them – is based on our (continuous) judgment of the morality of these characters. Zillmann therefore conceptualized viewers as “untiring moral monitors” (2000, p.54). As a result of this monitoring, we rejoice when the hero, who we judge to be “good” based on our own conceptualization of morality, triumphs over the villain (in simpler terms, “bad”), who we have judged as deserving of his punishment based on his or her moral violations. In sum, viewers’ monitoring of moral considerations in the narrative, influence their enjoyment as well as character liking. To be more specific, enjoyment and liking are predicted to be higher when the narrative involves positive outcomes for good characters and negative outcomes for bad characters (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012; Raney, 2005; Raney & Bryant, 2002, Zillmann, 2000).

Research in the ADT-tradition has outlined that this moral monitoring, rooting for the heroes to conquer over the villains (thereby creating *suspense*), and the subsequent pleasure when the good guys do win (resulting in *enjoyment*) are present in a variety of forms of media content. The media content examined ranges from news (Zillmann & Knobloch, 2001; Zillmann, Taylor, & Lewis, 1998), to sports programming (Bryant, Raney, & Zillmann, 2002; Zillmann & Paulus, 1993), to reality programming (Dalakas & Langenderfer, 2007), to the fictional program categories of comedy and drama (Raney, 2002; Raney & Bryant, 2002).

While ADT has been successful in explaining the appeal and enjoyment derived from “traditional” characters (i.e. heroes and villains), it has been more limited in explaining the appeal and enjoyment of the increasingly prevalent morally ambiguous characters (MACs) (Janicke & Raney, 2015; Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2014; Raney & Janicke, 2013; Shafer & Raney, 2012). These morally ambiguous characters, separate themselves from the traditionally good and bad characters, because they do not consistently act in a “good” or “evil” way. For example, popular television characters like Tony Soprano (*The Sopranos*), Dr. Gregory House (*House M.D.*), Don Draper (*Mad Men*) and Walter White (*Breaking Bad*), feature in storylines in which they intermix undeniably bad behavior with good motives and intentions and vice versa. Affective Disposition Theory (ADT) would posit that this would make these characters unlikeable or un-enjoyable, but the opposite is true: these MACs are often well liked and immensely enjoyed by viewers (Janicke & Raney, 2015; Raney & Janicke, 2013; Shafer & Raney, 2012).

The most recent addition in this research tradition has therefore sought to extend ADT (Raney, 2004; Shafer & Raney, 2012), in order to more fully explain the enjoyment, moral evaluations, and liking of these morally ambiguous characters. Researchers have focused on extending ADT by for example analyzing the role of character motivation and outcome (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2013), perceived realism, transportation and suspense (Eden et al., 2011; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012), identification, social comparison and morality salience (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2014; Sanders & Tsay-Vogel, 2015), personality traits (Krakowiak, 2015; Krakowiak & Tsay, 2011; Raney, Schmid, Niemann & Ellensohn, 2009; Tamborini, Eden, Bowman, Grizzard, & Lachlan, 2012) and the role of story schemas (Janicke & Raney, 2011, 2015; Shafer & Raney, 2012).

MIME and the consequences for moral judgment

Another important framework that is used in analyzing the relationship between morality and media exposure and its subsequent effects is the MIME model (Tamborini, 2011/2013). It is built on the dual-process model of morality as used in the moral foundations theory (MFT: Haidt & Joseph, 2007), combined with tenets from exemplification theory of media influence (Zillmann, 2000). The MIME model seeks to explain how media content is processed and responded to and how the appraisal patterns of different types of media content can in turn influence media selection. The MIME model integrates micro-level influence of moral intuitions on experienced enjoyment with a macro-level approach of their possible influence in media production. “In doing so, the model offers a foundation for understanding how various audience subcultures (defined and distinguished by their shared sense of morality) both influence the production of media fare and are influenced by exposure to it” (Mastro, Enriquez, Bowman, Prabhu, & Tamborini, 2013, p. 75).

Tamborini (2011, 2013) argues that cultural emphases on certain moral domains can affect the salience of specific moral intuitions, which consequently affects how moral judgments are made. Furthermore, he argued that the salience of a moral module is impacted by narratives, and especially by the presence of (moral) exemplars in media.

The model’s predictive utility and overall claims have been upheld by several studies (Tamborini, 2013). For example by research focusing on the claim that media can increase domain salience by exposure to moral exemplar primes (i.e. heroes and villains) (Eden, Oliver, Tamborini, Limperos, & Woolley, 2015; Tamborini, Grizzard, Eden, & Lewis, 2011). Several studies also reported results that are consistent with the assumption that salient domains can shape media appraisals. For example, research on film previews and the salience of the domains of harm and fairness predicted views of justness and graphicness in the film (Tamborini,

Eden, Bowman, Grizzard, & Lachlan, 2012). And while examining the long-term processes and effects in the MIME tradition are limited, there are still some studies that provide insight into the reciprocal processes and some of the assumptions outlined in MIME. For example, the prediction that groups will develop a shared or similar pattern of domain salience was studied by Bowman, Droguel and Joeckel (2011) by comparing the domain salience in groups of Germans and Americans, while a study conducted by Graham et al. (2009) reported similar results for a comparison with groups of political conservatives and liberals. Lastly, two studies on exposure to soap operas provide support in line with the idea that in the long run the reciprocal processes described in MIME lead to maintenance of group values (Eden, Tamborini, Lewis, Grizzard, & Weber, 2010; Tamborini, Weber, Eden, Bowman, & Grizzard, 2010).

While a considerable amount of research effort has been devoted to disentangling how morality in media content affects its viewers, researchers have also investigated how (forms and aspects of) morality is actually represented in media-content.

1.3.2 Morality and television: content-analytical studies

As stated before, the study of morality in television content has mostly been dealt with by scholars in an indirect manner (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013), by focusing on topics of moral (societal) concern (i.e. sex and violence on TV).

The work conducted by Gerbner and colleagues deal with morality in an implicit manner on two levels. On the one hand the most well-known topic of the Cultural Indicators project has been its concern with the moral topic of violence, and centers on the notion of victims and perpetrators (or: “*Who gets away with what against whom?*”, Gerbner, 2005, p.11). However, morality has also been woven into the very fabric of the Message System Analysis aspect of the Cultural Indicators project, when considering its central questions: *What is?* – *What is important?* – *What is right or wrong?* – and *What is related to what?* (Gerbner, 1969). By focusing on these questions, Message System Analysis revealed for television as a system what was seen as important (through repetition over television content as a whole) and therefore good and what was reprehensible (and punished) and therefore bad. The extensive research for example revealed a pattern of over-representation of violence as well as of men, Caucasians and adults, a criminalization of ethnic minorities as perpetrators and victims of crime, a thoroughly domesticated representation of women and a virtual absence of children and the elderly (for example: Gerbner, 1995; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). Aside from the extensive work done by Gerbner and colleagues over the years, other researchers have also (most often indirectly) dealt with forms of morality in television content.

In their study of immoral behavior in the content of soap operas, Sutherland and Siniawsky (1982) concluded that contrary to public perceptions, soap operas did not condone or promote immoral behaviors. Soap operas, they found, did extensively feature moral topics, such as extramarital affairs, murder and deceit, since they are “the mainstay of dramatic conflict” (p.73). However, those characters who commit immoral acts or moral transgressions faced either social or economic repercussions, thereby supporting and upholding the status quo.

Selnow’s work also focused on a specific aspect of morality, it analyzed the presence of problems and their resolutions (1986) and the presence of values (1990) in one week of prime-time fictional television. The results reveal that a few moral lessons dominate in prime time fiction, such as “good wins out over evil”, “truth wins out in the end”, and “hard work yields rewards” (Selnow, 1986, p.69). The results also illustrate that contrary to the public perception of television, prime time fiction represents a great variety of positive personal values in many different scenarios. These results lead the author to conclude that instead of eroding publicly shared values, television’s message is in line with values promoted by mainstream authority institutions.

If the strength of a lesson grows with the frequency of its exhibition and with the variance of conditions under which it is displayed, then television’s lessons are remarkably coherent and congruent with the beliefs of churches, schools, and commercial institutions (Selnow, 1990, p.72).

Contrary to the results found by Selnow (1986, 1990), Sutherland and Siniawsky (1982) and the work done by Gerbner and colleagues were the results reported by Potter and Ware (1987) and Potter and Vaughan (1997). Both studied the presence and consequences of anti-social acts in prime time fictional content and taken together it can be concluded that a) there is a great deal of antisocial activity on fictional prime time programming, b) both heroes and villains commit antisocial acts, c) there are great differences between fictional genres in the amount and type antisocial acts they represent, and d) these acts are almost always (88%) committed without punishment or the burden of feeling remorseful. Especially the last conclusion is seen as problematic by the authors, since “social learning theory explains that people learn best those things that they see most often, those things that are most rewarded, those things that are portrayed as justified, and those things that they are most able to perform in their own lives” (Potter & Ware, 1987, p.684).

Focusing on television news reporting, Baym’s research (2000) described and analyzed how a sense of moral authority was constructed in the news. Focusing on a series of news reports following the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal

building, Baym examined how journalists constructed their authority to tell moralizing stories. By speaking as *we*, they asserted themselves as moral agents on two levels: In the guise of the “*institutional we*” the news anchors and narrators functioned as the voice of authoritative institutionalized professionals, socially sanctioned by and for the community to determine the “facts” for the community, while as the “*representative we*” they envisioned themselves as locals – one of the people - who speak with the voice of community. The use of “*We*” in both its forms, Baym concludes, can be seen as a discursive strategy to construct televised journalistic moral authority as a voice that speaks for and about the community and the things it holds dear (moral topics).

One of the first studies focused on television’s newer scandal genres, already addressed earlier in this chapter, was the study conducted by Grabe (2002) about *The Jerry Springer Show*. In this study she analyzes the moral repertoire of the show, more specifically its norm violations and subsequent punishment and concludes that contrary to the public’s perception *The Jerry Springer Show* actually promotes a rather conservative take on family values. She concludes that “... they do not recognize that instead of encouraging deviation from a moral code, the Springer show might contribute to the promotion of traditional family values that moralistic politicians and clergy would approve of” (2002, p.326).

A more recent exploration of reality television, and more specifically the game show *Survivor*, analyzed the presence of anti-social behavior and its consequences (Wilson, Robinson, & Callister, 2012). In strong contrast with the conclusions in Grabe’s (2002) research, these researchers conclude that the show incorporated a high dosage of antisocial behavior (1 anti-social act per minute) and that the majority of the anti-social acts committed on the analyzed seasons of the show were neither punished or rewarded. Specifically the absence of punishment is worrisome in the eyes of the researchers, similar to the conclusions of Potter and Ware (1987) and Potter & Vaughan (1997), more so than the also apparent lack of rewards for anti-social behavior, since in the absence of negative consequences, viewers are more inclined to model certain behaviors (cf. Bandura, 2002).

In her dissertation, Krijnen (2007) builds on the previous studies of morality in different programs and genres and studies how morality is present in television’s narrative content. Based on a content analysis of the narrative content of Dutch prime time television she concludes that two-thirds of the moral messages revolve around four moral themes: the good life, the family, civil conduct, and politics. Prime time television, the results prove, often frames these themes in a positive sense, namely pro-family, pro-democracy and pro-civility, contrary to the public debate that denounces television as the instigator of the decline of public morality. She then qualitatively and quantitatively explored the ways in which prime time television sparked the moral imagination of viewers

and concluded that television, regardless of the genre, sparked moral deliberation and moral insight, and should be seen as a resource in the process of becoming (more) morally mature.

Lastly, Hastall, Bilandzic and Sukalla (2013) recently examined and contrasted the portrayal of social norm violations in four popular fictional television genres—crime drama, medical drama, comedy, and daily soap. They found that in 225 episodes of 15 popular television series, representing almost 130 hours of popular television program, 12,694 norm violations were coded, highlighting the large presence of violations of social norms in contemporary television series. From a social learning or moral cultivation perspective, not only the high number of found norm violations may give rise to concern, but also certain specifics of the portrayal. Specifically, only about a third of the recorded norm violating behaviors were portrayed as punished. Furthermore, the rates for apology and forgiving were very low. Almost all recorded norm violations were intended by the perpetrator and mainly attributed to egoistic motives, while altruistic motives to commit norm violations or social pressure to refrain from committing a norm violation were rare. The results also revealed genre differences and “thus generally support television’s potential for genre-specific moral cultivation. Crime drama shows the highest amount of norm violations overall, the highest number of violence-related norm violations and also by far the lowest amount of partnership-related or friendship-related norm violations” (Hastall et al., 2013, p.17). Crime drama series, compared to the other three studied fictional genres, have the highest punishment rate and the highest degree of egoistic as well as altruistic motives; however they also feature the lowest percentage of apologies and moral reflections. Based on their results, the researchers state that more research is necessary to analyze the moral content of television programming in general as well as the content of genre-specific moral messages. In conclusion they state that:

“...this socially relevant area of research can greatly benefit from further theory and method development and deserves great attention not only by the concerned public, but likewise from the scientific community in order to objectify the debate by providing empirical insights about cultivation-relevant moral messages in television” (Hastall et al., 2013, p.18).

Overall, the results of these studies paint a picture that is both in contrast as well as in line with the public’s perception of television’s immoral content. Much of the content analyzed did feature transgressions of the moral order, but a slight majority of the results also pointed out that sanctions almost always followed these transgressions. These sanctions varied from legal prosecution, to economic

repercussions and disapproval of others in the program. This means that in over half of the studies the results are not in line with television’s supposed negative moral value (cf. Gerbner, 1998a; Grabe, 2002; Krijnen, 2007; Selnow, 1986, 1990, Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982). Based on these studies, we can conclude that television represents a large range of positive personal values, that television “associates goodness and positive values with the state, power, and recognized authority” (Selnow, 1990, p.72), that television messages reinforce the idea of the family as the cornerstone of society, and it seems “to promote ‘functional behaviour’ instead of ‘dysfunctional behaviour’” (Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005, p.370). On the other hand, the results of Potter and Ware (1987), Potter & Vaughan (1997), Wilson, Robinson and Callister (2012 and Hastall et al. (2013) studies revealed an overabundance of norm violations and a surprisingly low amount of punishment. These results, especially in the light of social learning or moral cultivation perspective, lead the authors to voice their concerns for television’s impact on viewer’s moral judgments.

When considering the research conducted on morality and television, it is clear that it covers a large range of diversity in focus on (pre-defined) norms, values, codes, interactions, emotions and worldviews, most often in distinct genres. We conclude that these studies focused on morality in television content were mostly based on prime time fiction programming or a limited number of television genres, and analyzed television content via a deductive approach with pre-defined categories of specific aspects of morality (i.e. problem resolutions, values, anti-social behavior and norm violations). As a result the content of morality has been mostly conceptualized in broad terms or very specific topics, where similar to the previously discussed media theory, a clear conceptualization of morality as a concept is missing. As a consequence we felt the need to conduct an open exploration of morality in Dutch prime time television.

1.4 Research overview, research objectives and research questions

Research into the symbolic role of television, explores the connection between the medium and society from a distanced position, wherein it emphasizes the message system as a whole and pinpoints prevalent and all encompassing messages and meanings, which are assumed to have a cohesive function. These messages constitute the moral core of the message system. The question of television as a mirror of and forum for societal reflections on morality becomes even more interesting when combined with the sociological conceptualization of late-modern society. Modernization entails the processes of industrialization,

globalization and rationalization, which means disenchantment of the world as well as individualization (Giddens, 1991). This implicates a growing autonomy of the individual and the necessity to reflexively construct the meaning of life and identity. As a result, religion and spirituality have largely become a private matter (Berger, 1969; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Luckmann, 1967), which altogether changed the moral foundation of society. The empty space, left behind by the church, has been taken over by other institutions, such as education and media. The role of the media in this case is crucial in the process of ‘mediation’ (Thompson, 1995), the increasing importance of communication media relative to traditional means of communication. The media have become one of the “expert-systems” of society, which replace traditional religion as a new source of certainty and trust (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994). With the growing secularization, the moral foundation of society becomes individualized, and morality becomes differentiated as the overarching ‘sacred canopy’ loses its integrative power (Berger, 1969).

The process of individualization is connected to globalization which is by many regarded as one of the most important social-cultural developments of the post-war period (De Beer, 2007). Via the Social and Cultural Developments in the Netherlands project (‘Sociaal-Culturele Ontwikkelingen in Nederland’, abbreviated SOCON) the process of individualization and cultural change was studied longitudinally (1980-2011) in the Dutch context. Individualization in the Netherlands is a slow and gradual process that eventually forms little to no threat to the social cohesion in society. Felling, Peters and Scheepers (2000) conclude that a transition towards the value of self-realization and the secularization of the 1980s and 1990s where the most radical aspects of individualization in the Netherlands, while other processes of detraditionalisation were far less prominent. Eisinga, Scheepers and Bles (2012) studied a potential loss of common values in the Netherlands against the backdrop of the increasingly multicultural society. They find a gradual change towards individualization, particularly in the increasing value of self-realization. Nevertheless, they conclude that there is no evidence of collective values being lost. They do see a shift towards the prominence of more calculated economic bourgeois values and consumptive hedonism, which then can be seen as an indicator of individualization, increased societal prosperity and technological advances. When applied to the topic of morality and television, the question arises if the process of individualization is reflected in the content of television’s many genres.

Whereas previous research has outlined an array of different aspects of morality in specific genres, we might conclude that a conceptualization of how morality as a whole is represented in television content is missing. This dissertation seeks to remedy this gap, by exploring the breadth of what Dutch prime time

television has to offer when it comes to morality. We aim to reconstruct the moral message system of television by a comparison of various genres on prime time, in order to assess if television as society’s central storyteller conveys a uniform conservative moral message or functions as a forum for varying moral repertoires.

Our approach is based on the idea that morality is fragmented and fits the differentiated modern society, and functions as a sort of individualized and secular moral palette untethered to either religious traditions or socio-political morals. As a result we will not focus on particular television programs with a moral or moralistic core (such as televised pastoral meetings or talk shows like *Dr. Phil*) or singular genres of television. We strive to capture the moral message system as a whole, to give insight in what sort, or types of morality and moral messages viewers on a day to day basis might see on television. We assume a *multiple moralities approach* in this study (Verplaetse, 2008; WRR, 2003). Multiple moralities exist side by side in contemporary society, and serve as a source of appropriate behavior in differing social contexts. Which type of morality is applied is the choice of the autonomous individual. We are curious whether and which of the variety of moralities present in and reflective of the fragmented contemporary society are reflected in television’s content.

We start from the idea that morality is structured around the obligations the individual has towards the social group, and as such it shapes a person’s conduct. It can be understood as a set of norms and values that an individual in a society accepts and adheres to as an overriding guide for behavior, of the individual as well as everyone else in that society or social group (Gert, 2011). In this study we conceptualize morality as: (societal) guidelines for action based on principles of good, bad and desirable (Dupuis, 1980; Gert, 2011; Hijmans, 2010; Luckmann, 2002). The expectation is that morality is visible and recognizable in the actions of individuals in the (mediated) context of everyday life, and more specifically the following evaluations and judgments about this conduct by others as part of a moral community (Durkheim, 1995; Hijmans, 2010; Luckmann, 2002).

When considering the layered nature of contemporary morality and the complex relationship between morality, media and society, we cannot straightforwardly map morality in prime time television. Previous research has shown that there is no readily available instrument to describe and map the representation of morality. We therefore aim to start this project with an inductive exploration, focused on describing how (potentially different types of) morality is represented on prime time television. Overall, this study aims to answer the overarching question of:

How is morality represented on Dutch prime time television?, and does so by exploring three global research questions:

- a. *Which types of morality are present on Dutch prime time television?*
- b. *Which similarities and differences in the representation of morality are there between television genres?*
- c. *Are there changes in the representation of morality over time?*

1.5 Outline of the dissertation

In this chapter the research goal and research question(s) of this dissertation were outlined, building towards an explorative study into the nature of morality as encountered on everyday prime time television in The Netherlands. We aim to reconstruct the moral message system of television by comparison of morality in different program genres as well as changes in the system over time. In order to reach the objectives proposed in this dissertation it is built on several empirical studies, in which the representation of morality was studied in different sets of content material, using qualitative and quantitative content analysis. In preparation for each of the studies theoretical reflections on the concept of morality were alternated with training sessions with coders were undertaken to elaborate our coding instruments methodologically and analytically.

The first study, presented in chapter 2 and published in *The Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, is an exploration of the representation of morality in one night of prime time television. The study was inspired by Newcomb's (1988) classical study "One Night of Prime Time. An Analysis of Television's Multiple Voices". Our study focused on describing the way television genres present morality and assess what types of morality could be discerned. The outcomes confirm that prime time television presents a plethora of different types of morality, dominant moral themes and a variety of moral domains.

Chapter 3 forms a bridge between the qualitative descriptions of television's moral content and the systematic descriptions of variations. In this chapter we reflect on the outcomes of the first qualitative study to elaborate the categories of our central concept of types of morality. In this chapter we also report on our teaching experiences with coding instruments to assess moral content in commercials. Both experiences of training sessions and empirical outcomes of the analyses of commercials based on these sessions, as well as further elaborations on the conceptual level, were needed to construct the coding instruments used in Chapters 4 and 5 (see Appendix II) and Chapter 6 and 7 (see Appendix III). We discovered that morality comes forward both on the program or story level,

as well as on the casting level (i.e. that is in the conduct of persons and characters), and the reactions from the relevant community. In moving forward, this finding was integrated in the development of our instrument(s).

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 are dedicated to exploring changes in the representation of morality in television fiction over time, and each chapter forms a report on one of the two overarching aspects incorporated in this study. The conducted study focused on morality on the program level in television fiction over time, of which the results are presented in Chapter 4. The study also focused on morality on the level of casting, of which the results are presented in Chapter 5. In Chapter 4, we compared the moral content of fiction programs from 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2010 to assess changes in moral themes, the dominant moral domain, and in types of morality. As the article is submitted for publication and is focused on specific and condensed variables, Appendix IV presents several additional tables providing an in-depth look at the breadth of this research. In Chapter 5 (published in *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap*), we reported on changes over time in the distribution of main characters as good, ambivalent or bad and the associations with demographic categories as well as the kind of transgressions they show.

Chapter 6 and 7 are dedicated to exploring differences between television genres in the presented aspects of morality, and each chapter forms a report on one of the two overarching aspects incorporated in this study. The outcomes are also presented in two articles: one on the program or story level (Chapter 6, submitted for publication), and the other on the genre differences in transgressions, evaluations and moral nature of persons and characters. (Chapter 7, accepted for publication). As the articles submitted for publication focused on specific and condensed variables, Appendix V presents several additional tables providing an in-depth look at the breadth this research.

In the final chapter we reflect on the outcomes of the various cumulative studies to formulate our conclusions on the presentation of morality in prime time television. In this dissertation we have a mixed-method design, combining qualitative and quantitative content analysis, resulting in sequential triangulation, this is used to fulfill the objective of this dissertation. Sequential triangulation entails that qualitative and quantitative methods are used in different phases of the study (Creswell, 1994, p.16). The dissertation, as a result, is a cumulative project in which each study is informed by the results of the previous one.

2

CHAPTER

‘One Night of Prime Time’: An explorative study of morality in one night of prime time television¹

Research into television’s ethical value has mostly focused on scandal genres, like *Big Brother*, *Jersey Shore* and *Jerry Springer*, and only recently have researchers started to explore television’s moral content with a broader focus. In this study we explore and describe the types of morality and moral content of a night of Dutch prime time television with an open and inductive approach through a qualitative content analysis. Our results revealed thirteen types of morality as well as a basic differentiation between morals that react on violations and transgressions, which focus on restricting behavior, and morals that are focused on ideals and values and stimulate social behavior. Lastly, we differentiated three moral meta-themes that permeate all genres, as well as six moral themes that arose only in specific genre-clusters.

¹ This chapter was published as: Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2014). ‘One Night of Prime Time’: An Explorative Study of Morality in One Night of Prime Time Television. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality*, 29(3), 184-199, DOI: 10.1080/08900523.2014.918498

2.1 Introduction

The relationship between television and morality seems an uneasy one at first glance, at least when focused on the way in which the public opinion scapegoats the media for various social ills. In searching for causes of society's hardening social climate, the debate more often than not turns towards the media to explain the various social ills that plague contemporary society (Biltereyst, 2004; Krijnen, 2007; Lind & Rarick, 1992; Tavener, 2000).

This enduring debate centers on the assumption that the media can change both our moral compass and our moral behavior. The idea is that through the indirect experiences encountered through media exposure viewers might get a distorted image of what is normal, good and bad in everyday society and that the (anti-social) behaviors and their consequences represented in the media might serve as a learning behavioral model especially for younger viewers (Bandura, 1977; Gerbner, 1998). This concern about the ways in which the media can influence our perceptions of moral and immoral behavior was present early on in mass communication studies: for example the study into the influence of reading newspapers on anti-social behaviors by Fenton in 1911, and the famous Payne Fund Study in the 1929-1932 period which focused on the erosion of children's moral standards by feature films (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013, Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

These concerns still continue today, and can be seen in the debates surrounding (among other things) television and its newer genres. Reality shows such as *Big Brother*, *Jersey Shore* and *Cheat on Me*, are judged as a corrupting influence on viewers and an illustration of the moral decay of society, a fate that was once reserved for feature films in the 1920s and 1930s, comics in the 1950s and talk shows in the 1990s (Abt & Seesholtz, 1994; Biltereyst, 2004; Forman, 1935; Lundy, Ruth & Park, 2008; Turiel, 2002; Wertham, 1954).

Television's scandal genres like reality soaps and tabloid programs like *Jerry Springer* draw the attention of scholars, who often conclude that beneath the manifest norm violations there is a latent message that continuously reasserts dominant societal values (Gerbner, 1998; Grabe, 2002; Klapper, 1960; Krijnen & Tan, 2009; Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982). As Grabe (2002) concludes about *Jerry Springer*:

This study's findings produced convincing evidence that the Springer show draws clear lines between right and wrong consistent with enduring notions of virtuousness. ... by explicit support for honesty and monogamy in relationships.... The irony in this case is that the talk show perpetuates the same moral values that critics accuse it of destroying (p. 325-326).

These findings are particularly interesting because they contradict the public opinion on these programs, illustrating that there is more to morality than manifest transgressions (and evaluations). It seems that there is a paradoxical connection between manifest immorality and societal core values when it comes to television.

If the connection between manifest immorality (lewd behavior and other norm violations) and societal core values is a characteristic of the newer genres (such as the trash-talk show & reality soaps), the generality of this relation remains unclear. This leads us to question what the whole spectrum of television content actually has to offer viewers when it comes to morality.

2.2 Theoretical background

Theoretically the question of morality and television is multifaceted. Firstly, we see the developments in morality against the backdrop of changes in modern society. Modernization entails secularization and rationalization, which means disenchantment of the world as well as individualization (Giddens, 1991). This implicates a growing autonomy of the individual and the necessity to reflexively construct the meaning of life and identity. As a result religion and spirituality have largely become a private matter (Luckmann, 1967; Berger, 1969), which altogether changed the moral foundation of society. The empty space, left behind by the church, has been taken over by other institutions, such as education and media. The role of the media in this case is crucial in the process of 'mediation' (Thompson, 1995). Media assist modern men in their quest for meaning in a restless and open world of uncertainty (e.g. 'risk society'). The media have become one of the "expert-systems" of society, which replace traditional religion as a new source of certainty and trust (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994).

With the growing secularization, the moral foundation of society becomes individualized, however the need for guidance and specific directives remains and has even increased because of permanent reflexivity and individual responsibility. This may explain the emergence of hybrid television genres such as the talk show and make-over television, because they provide answers to the everyday problems of the modernization of society and offer a symbolic resource for modern life (Hijmans, 2000; Redden, 2008).

Secondly, this study follows the tradition of the cultural or ritual approach to communication (Carey, 1975). In this view media are a source of commonly shared meanings and the creator of a shared symbolic environment. People today are born into a symbolic environment with television as its main source of daily information, thereby bringing virtually everyone into a shared culture. This

shared culture is created (in part) through storytelling. Storytelling is unique to the human (communicative) experience (Gottschall, 2012; Lule, 2001), since "Humans are the only species that lives in a world erected by the stories they tell" (Gerbner, 1998, p.175). Before the mass media were instated, parents or community elders would tell stories to younger generations, like myths, to explain how the world works (Rosengren, 1984). Today, television acts as our main storyteller, hereby helping to integrate individuals into the established social order by offering certain models about appropriate values, behaviors, norms and ideas (Gerbner, 1998). Through the repeated exposure to stories about everyday human (moral and immoral) behavior and its consequences, the rules of morality are internalized (Bandura, 1977, 2002).

In sum, because people share similar forms of media (similar stories about the world), they have come to gain shared meanings as well as a similar vision of reality, which makes living together in an organized society possible (McQuail, 2000, p.64). The theoretical assumption is that a systematic study of media-content enables us to draw conclusions about the nature of a society's cultural environment. Media-content is a reflection (*mirror*) of the hopes, fears, mores, and shared values people hold, and therefore a good indicator for the state a culture is in (Klapper, 1960; McQuail, 2000).

The study of morality in television content has mostly been dealt with by scholars in an indirect manner, with studies focused on topics of moral concern (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013). This is perhaps most evident in the extensive research conducted on sexual and violent media content, but extends to other areas as well. For example, the moral content of prime time television has been studied under the guise of the representation of problem-resolutions, values as well as norm-violations in television content (Grabe, 2002; Hastall, Bilandzic & Sukulla, 2013; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Selnow, 1986, 1990; Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982). The results of these studies are mixed between on the one hand dissuasion of the moral panic regarding television's moral value, stating that television represents a large range of positive personal values, that television "associates goodness and positive values with the state, power, and recognized authority" (Selnow, 1990, p.72), that television messages "reinforce the idea of the family as the cornerstone of society", and that television seems "to promote 'functional behaviour' instead of 'dysfunctional behaviour'" (Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005, p.370). On the other hand, the results of Hastall, Bilandzic and Sukalla's (2013) study revealed an overabundance of norm violations and a surprisingly low amount of punishment. These results, especially in the light of social learning or moral cultivation perspective, lead the authors to voice their concerns for television's impact on viewer's moral judgments.

These studies focused on morality in television content were mostly based on prime time fiction programming or a limited number of television genres, and analyzed television content via a deductive approach with pre-defined categories of specific aspects of morality (i.e. problem resolutions, values and norm violations). Furthermore, the review of these studies revealed that a complete and empirically driven conceptualization of how morality as such is represented in television content is missing.

2.3 Research goals and research questions

In all previous studies, morality was either studied through the lens of predefined values, problems or moral categories, but never described as an empirically founded concept. The present study is focused on describing what morality looks like on prime time television, the different forms it would take on, which would then enable us to analyze and describe the richness and complexity of morality in television content. Our goal was to give an empirically founded answer to the question of the nature of the relationship between contemporary television content and morality, which lead us to three explorative research questions:

1. *What types of morality are represented on a night of prime time television?*
2. *Which moral themes are represented on a night of prime time television?*
3. *What are differences between genres in terms of morality on a night of prime time television?*

2.4 Method

In our study we chose to adopt an inductive approach towards morality on television, which is in line with the tenets of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). To this end we chose to work with a sample that contained a constructed night of prime time to best capture the richness in genres of Dutch television, and we applied a qualitative form of content analysis as our explorative method.

2.4.1 Sample and procedures

We chose to construct a theoretical (or purposive) sample representative of a night of Dutch prime time television. The sample consists of twenty-four programs aired between 19.00 - 23.00 from both the public service broadcasting (Nederland 1, 2 & 3) as well as commercial networks (RTL 4, 5, 7, 8, SBS6, Net5 & Veronica), from a week in May of 2009. We wanted to create an evening that was

as rich and diverse as possible in genres and types of programs and we did not exclude genres aside from sports broadcasts and television commercials.²

The Dutch television landscape is rich in Dutch programming, as well as imported (fiction and reality) programs from primarily the United States, but also from Great Britain, Germany and Belgium. In our sample we chose to include American fiction, since it is very dominant in the Dutch television landscape. Kuipers (2008, p.177) reported in her study on American fiction on Dutch television, in 1997, that American fiction comprised about 36 percent of all the fiction programs on the public broadcasting channels and 79 percent of all fiction on commercial broadcasting channels.

The twenty-four programs in our sample were transcribed and then analyzed through qualitative content analysis, grounded in a systematic comparison based on the aspects of the sensitizing concept 'morality' (Wester, 1995; Wester & Peters, 2004). This form of qualitative content analysis was geared towards reconstructing the latent television structures, more specifically the types of morality and moral themes. The inductive approach enabled us to work towards a reconstruction of types of morality and a description of differentiations within types. The analysis was executed and checked by three researchers, which enabled *peer debriefing* (i.e. discussing results and developing the conceptual framework with other researchers in order to increase the quality of the analysis, the conclusions and interpretations; Wester & Peters, 2004). The setup of this study also enabled *researcher triangulation*, since three independent researchers can compensate for single-researcher bias (Denzin, 1989).

2.4.2 Morality as sensitizing concept

An inductive approach means "that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis" (Patton, 1980, p. 306). Working with a sensitizing concept gives the researcher a "general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances" (Blumer, 1954, p.7). Our sensitizing concept morality was used as a guideline of key terms and issues that would guide our analysis, which during the course of the analysis developed into a grounded and systematic overview of conceptual variations (Hijmans, 2006; Van den Hoonaard, 1997).

In this study we conceptualize morality as: (societal) guidelines for action based on principles of good, bad and desirable (Dupuis, 1980; Gert, 2011; Luckmann, 2002; Hijmans, 2010). The expectation is that morality is visible and recognizable

² Not because sports programs do not represent morality, but because they are time consuming registrations of live encounters and as such they are more informative about morality in society than about typical types of television morality.

in the actions of individuals, and more specifically the following evaluations and judgments about this conduct by others as part of a moral community (Luckmann, 2002; Hijmans, 2010).

We assume a *multiple moralities approach* in this study (Verplaetse, 2008, p.7), against the background of our conceptualization of television as a rich, dense and complex cultural forum which critically reflects and unifies the culture it is part of (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983, 1984), rather than a uniform and conservative message system (Gerbner, 1998). In his classical study of a night of prime time television Newcomb argued that there is room for plurality on television, aside from the abstract dominant ideology, and that “this sort of variation accounts for both popularity and banality, for maintenance and change” (1988, p.105). The idea that television content is layered instead of uniform leads us to question if morality in television content might also be fragmented, or layered. Because of a lack of a content based categorization (which will be the product of the study), we will approach the variation in morality with a rough differentiation in formal, informal and intuitive morality (Verplaetse, 2008; WRR, 2003).

The formal type of morality is based on official codes of conduct, such as laws, treaties and regulations. Law- and other (formal) rule violations indicate what society sees as illegal and legal behavior and warranted and unwarranted behavior (WRR, 2003, p.61). The informal type of morality is based on cultural habits, ideas of common decency and cultural beliefs. These social norms are context-specific but are universally known and understood, and enforced by social pressures (WRR, 2003; Hoijtink, 2001), which becomes clear in moral outrage and social exclusion, rituals of shaming and loss of reputation. Taken together these forms of morality can be understood as a set of norms that an individual in a society has ingrained as an overriding guideline for his behavior and everyone else’s in that specific moral community (Gert, 2011; WRR, 2003).

And finally we discern the intuitive type of morality, also called emotional or universal morality, this type is biologically engrained in our body and psyche (Verplaetse, 2008). This latter type is built up out of four subtypes (bonding, violence, cleansing, and cooperation), and all are related to evolutionary processes and therefore not an option, but a built-in part of human nature (Verplaetse, 2008, p.6). What is at stake is the human capacity for empathy and reciprocity, but also the physical impulse of disgust and the subconscious processes related to the use of violence in threatening situations. We chose to include the intuitive type of morality, as proposed in recent studies (e.g. de Waal, 2013; Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013; Greene, 2013; Haidt, 2001; Hauser, 2006; Verplaetse, 2008), to analyze if this type of visceral morality can add to our understanding of televised morality aside from the culturally formed types of formal and informal morality.

2.5 Results

We first tried to differentiate the results between two types of genres, fiction and non-fiction, but quickly came to the conclusion that this categorization would not suffice. The development in genre-hybridization of fact and fiction, leading to for example documentary soaps (docusoap) and reality-game shows (Corner, 1996; Coles, 2000; Hill, 2005), made the simple differentiation between fiction and non-fiction regarding morality in television content unmanageable. We then differentiated the programs in three distinct genre-clusters (i.e. news and information, entertainment and reality and fiction) that allowed us to describe and compare the different types of morality and articulate dominant moral themes.

In general, our results revealed thirteen specifications of the three main types of morality we started with. Furthermore, we found a very basic differentiation between morals that react on violations and transgressions, that focus on restricting behavior and morals that are focused on ideals and values and stimulate social behavior (see also WRR, 2003, p.9). Lastly, we differentiated three moral meta-themes that are unbound by a genre cluster, as well as six moral themes that permeate only specific genre-clusters.

Genre-clusters and moral content

Generally, the programs within the news- and information cluster (i.e. news broadcasts, current affairs programs, and current affairs talk shows) work from the perspective of the common good and focus on commenting on current events in the world. The information in this cluster showcased its moral nature when it dealt with (un)wanted and (in)appropriate behavior. A basic moral function of this cluster is making transgressions in the public sphere and their punishment public, as well as openly addressing problems in society and proposing solutions to those social ills. Its societal purpose is to maintain and fortify public order in the constitutional state or community (Durkheim, 1933, 1982). What is unique about the news-cluster is that the representation of morality is partly grounded in professional norms of journalistic codes of ethics. These are visible when it comes to formulating context as well as balancing both sides of a story. Newsmakers select which current affairs are included in the newscast, and are thereby partly creating what counts as current affairs, i.e. they define what is (morally) important on the public agenda. Viewers are informed about the inherent moral choices in politics and policy, about conflicts and threats to the public interest and public order of (inter)national society. The moral content of the news and different current affairs programs generally focus on the functioning of the ‘trias politica’. In our material this becomes most apparent in

items about problems with the implementation of the formal type of morality in the execution of the democratic system, law and justice. For example: an item dealing with a lawyer's claim that there is an overreliance on criminal witnesses (who exchange criminal information for a reduced sentence) of the public prosecutors' office. Or in another item which deals with the difficulties in dealing with the governmental necessity to cut back on unemployment benefits as a result of the continuing financial crisis. All in all, our material shows that the morals in this cluster are predominantly connected with topics of public interest, the common good, public order and safety.

In the entertainment and reality cluster (i.e. documentary, consumer program, crime show, talk show, quiz, reunion program, make-over program, and therapy program) the focus shifts away from the common good and the public sphere to the perspective of the 'common man', who is represented in different roles. However, due to the extensive hybridization of the reality genre (Corner, 1996; Coles, 2000; Hill, 2005), the entertainment and reality cluster encompassed a continuum of programs that ranges from on the one hand journalistically oriented reality, then moves toward infotainment and ends with emotion-television. The journalistically oriented reality combines the journalistic code with morally sensitive topics, like public safety, justice and consumer trust. Infotainment combines a showcasing and staging of admirable qualities (like knowledge in game shows) as well as a public scaffold that deals with socially deviant behavior. People that showcase qualities valued in our society are lauded for their accomplishments, and those who have committed social transgression or have infringed on moral values are punished through ridicule and shame. For example, a mother who had left her children to enter in a reality show where winning would mean getting a breast enhancement was ridiculed and shamed, while contestants who win a game show by showcasing their intellect and acumen are lavished in compliments. On the opposite end of the continuum we find the programs categorized as emotion-television that focus on the smallest community in our society, namely the family. Individuals are presented as family members who are either part of or working towards being a normal, functional and loving family, and the programs propagate the moral ideal of the family as the cornerstone of society.

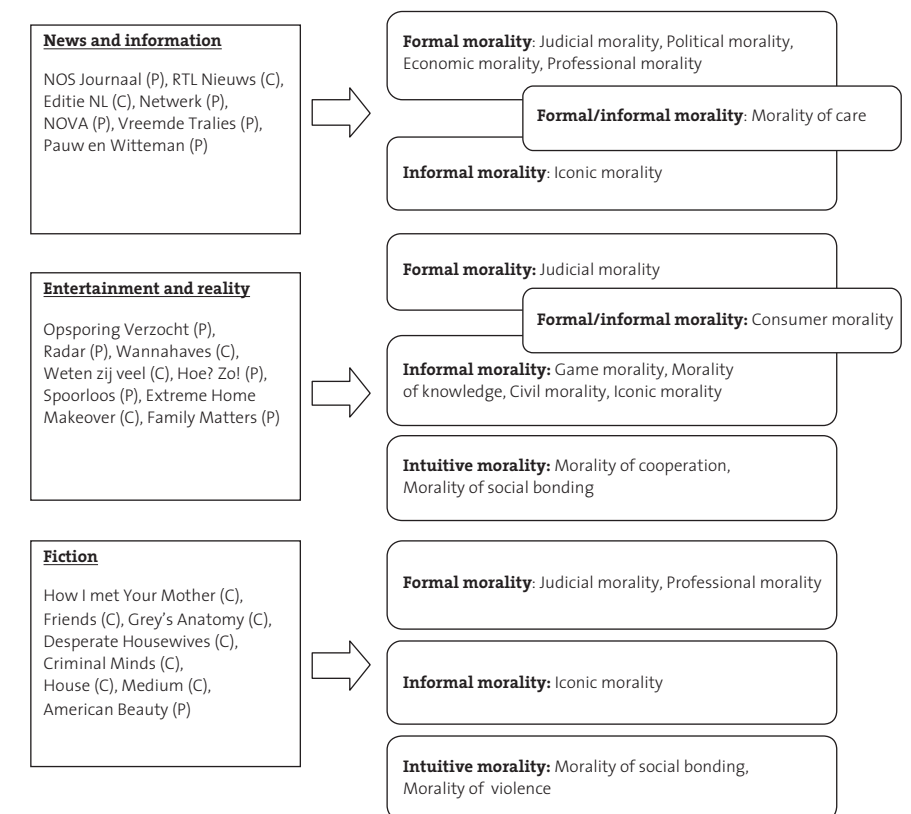
Lastly, fiction programs (i.e. crime drama, medical drama, dramedy, comedy and feature film) form the cluster that works from the perspective of the individual in the social context. Morality is embodied in the actions, the justifications for those actions of individuals who carry storylines, and more importantly the evaluations of these actions by others in the story (i.e. others who are part of the communities of for example work, friends, and family). The fiction-cluster focuses on the same moral content as the other two clusters but

from an individualized point of view. Fiction programs give insight into the inner world of an individual in various relational and professional communities.

Types of morality

The specification of the three main types of morality – formal, informal and intuitive – resulted in thirteen empirical types of morality based on all genre-clusters, as shown in Figure 1. We have formulated four specifications of the formal morality. *Judicial morality*, which entails all rules and regulations that are mandated by the law, and is focused on promoting public safety through the preservation of public order and justice. Secondly, we differentiated *political morality* that dictates the rules of conduct within the context of executing a

Figure 1 Flowchart of different types of morality per genre-cluster



Note. Aired on a public broadcasting channel (P), aired on a commercial broadcasting channel (C)

democratic system. *Economic morality* is the third specification of formal morality, which guides economical conduct based on market principles such as laissez faire, innovation and competition. And lastly, we specified *professional morality*, which guides professional conduct and is an articulation of professional norms, rights and duties that shape and guide professional conduct for professional groups such as medical profession, journalistic profession and professions within the law and order community.

We also specified two types of morality that combine aspects from formal and informal type of morality, namely *consumer morality* and *morality of care*. *Consumer morality* is a differentiation of the economic morality, since it is focused on consumers' rights, producers' duties, and the ideal of material consumption. It is a mix of formal laws and regulations, the informal concept of basic trust that consumers have in producers as well as materialism as ingrained in society's spirit. The *morality of care* is also partly formal, based on laws and regulations of the welfare state and the rights people derive from them, but also informal in values of solidarity that are shared when it comes to for example issues of healthcare or care for the elderly.

In addition to these mixed types of morality, we also formulated four specifications of the informal type of morality. We have termed the first specification, *civil morality* which is focused on shared standards of common decency and civility. The second specification is *morality of knowledge*, which is funded on the ideal of knowledge (in a knowledge society). The third differentiation we made, was *iconic morality* that focuses on exemplary (both good and bad) individuals that by the absence or presence of selflessness and virtuousness may function as an example for the community. *Game morality* was the last specification of the informal type of morality, which guides conduct in a game environment based on principles as fair play and good sportsmanship.

Lastly, we also encountered three types of intuitive morality in our material, namely *morality of social bonding*, *morality of cooperation* and *morality of violence*. The *morality of cooperation* is funded on evolutionary ingrained concepts of reciprocity and serves to guide a person's action towards win-win situations rather than solely personal gain situations. The *morality of social bonding* is based on the altruistic acts we engage in for those that are our kin. However, our material also showed us that at least in television content bonds of empathy and interpersonal altruism are not solely reserved for the family and we have come to extend the scope of the *morality of social bonding* to friends and romantic relationships. The *morality of violence* is a rare in our sample, which becomes dominant only in life threatening situations, a situation where one literally has to choose between one's own life and that of another.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the formal types of morality dominate the news and information cluster, the informal types of morality dominate the entertainment and reality cluster, and the fiction cluster is balanced quite evenly between the three main types of morality. Overall, the most prevalent moralities are the *judicial morality* and *iconic morality*, since they are present in all three genre-clusters. The genre-crossing presence of these two moralities indicate the importance of the law and rule based type of morality that focus on restricting behavior as well as ideal or value based type of morality focused on inspiring people to be the best they can be. Aside from the two types of morality that dominate all clusters, we also found two types of morality which were present in two genre-clusters, namely *professional morality* and *morality of social bonding*. *Professional morality* is present both in the news cluster and the fiction cluster, where it functions to regulate professional behavior in different professional contexts (e.g. medical community, community of law and order) from a real as well as fictionalized perspective. *The morality of social bonding*, which originally was based on blood-kinship, was extended in our material to close friends as well. It seems television content reflects every reality in that "the closer we are to each other, the more empathy we feel for one another, the greater our behavior is influenced by altruism towards each other" (Verplaetse, 2008, p.47, own translation).

Moral themes

Aside from the different specifications of morality, we found six moral themes that were dominant in specific genre-clusters. We also encountered three moral themes in the material that (frequently) recurred in all genre-clusters; as such they function as moral meta-themes. These recurrent moral meta-themes are at the heart of the stories in which television tells viewers what society holds most dear and values above all.

Genre-specific moral themes

For the news and information cluster, two specific moral themes arose out of our material. The first moral theme in this cluster is "*Honor should be cherished and defended*", which was at the heart of several items in this cluster. Honor is connected with cultural appreciation and public recognition, and is connected with the values of pride, respectability and reputation and their negative counterparts. This moral theme was found in for example an item dealing with the judicial battle for rehabilitation and reparation of the honor of Ina Post (who had been wrongfully accused and convicted of strangling an elderly woman), the case of well-known top criminal Willem Holleeder's criminal conviction as bad for his reputation as well as an item about a public tribute at the funeral of an esteemed Belgian politician who was respected within the European Union. The

prevalence of the moral theme focused on honor established a point about the role of the individual within this cluster: individuals function as public figures and not as private persons and the honorable individual places himself in service of the community, while the dishonorable person only seeks to profit from the community.

The second moral theme that is dominant in this cluster is *“Informed citizenship is the key to democracy”*. This theme is intricately tied to the moral function and power of this cluster of programs, namely that it critically analyzes democratic processes and the functioning of the government. This theme becomes especially prevalent in for example an item dealing with a crisis in the public’s trust of the government after it was made public that the government withheld information about a death in a fire in the prime minister’s residence. Another item that showcased the prevalence of this theme was about the complicated duty mayors have of informing and protecting of all their citizens when pedophiles who have served their time return to their old neighborhood.

For the entertainment and reality cluster, the first moral theme that we discerned was *“Consumption leads to the good life”*. This theme was prevalent in the programs tied to consumption, namely in consumer programs, lifestyle programs and makeover programs. In the consumer program issues dealt with failed consumer trust which had to be remedied in order to regain the balance and mutual trust needed for good consumer-producer relations. The lifestyle and makeover program dealt predominantly in a straightforward way with how products and services would improve viewers’ lives, ranging from new kitchen appliances, furniture and cars that were showcased in the makeover program, to promoting paragliding in the Dolomites, designing your own Adidas sneakers and swimming with white sharks.

The second moral theme that was discerned for this genre-cluster was *“Kindness, solidarity and civility are the glue that holds society together”*. This theme becomes apparent in the predominance of positive topics like the importance of giving back and paying it forward, of compassion and forgiveness. For example in the program ‘Extreme Home Make Over’ which focused on a local community that pays tribute to its local hero, a little girl Lizzie with a rare blood disease who organizes blood drives and toy donations for children in hospitals. But it is also communicated in topics that are more negatively toned, for example dealing with selfishness, rudeness and vulgarity. An example of this can be found in the trash talk show ‘Jensen’, where guests range from social deviants who display vulgar behavior to celebrities who have often committed social transgressions or have infringed on moral values, and the host shames and ridicules their behavior and urges the audience to do the same (quite similar to ‘The Jerry Springer Show’). The collective outrage that is mobilized by the show creates social cohesion and

serves to continuously reaffirm the central moral values of kindness, solidarity and most importantly civility.

The last moral theme we defined for the entertainment and reality cluster was *“You should play by the rules of the game”*. This rather straightforward moral theme is connected to game playing in all forms, in our material we encountered it in different types of game shows, but it also applies to sports. Playing by the rules of the game encompassed knowing what to do to win, acting appropriately and gracefully when you lose, playing fair and acknowledging the honor that comes with winning.

For the fiction cluster we only defined one cluster specific moral theme, namely *“Friends form our chosen family”*. Fiction was the only genre-cluster which highlighted friends as an important moral community, even to such an extent that we see the affective bonds that are normally associated with family transposed towards friends. We see the affective bonds based on empathy overcome rational duties and personal interests, in several instances in several different programs. For example, the lengths Dr. House goes to and the professional rules and protocols he breaks in order to save his best friend’s girlfriend or in the program ‘Desperate Housewives’ where a the group of female friends lie to the police in order to keep their friend Katherine from harm.

Moral meta-themes

Aside from the moral themes that we encountered in our material that were cluster specific, we also encountered moral meta-themes that we reiterated in all three genre-clusters. The first moral meta-theme that we discerned was *“The family is the cornerstone of society”*. In all three genre-clusters we found items dealing with the family and the importance of the family. Ranging from news, to entertainment and fiction we found items about parental responsibilities in society dealing with troubled youths, to items about bad parenting and Child Protective Services and family therapy, to reunions of long lost family as well as items on the lengths you would go to protect your child. In our material we encountered dysfunctional families that needed to relearn how to communicate, cooperate and be responsible as well as deserving (for example in ‘Family Matters’, ‘Desperate Housewives’, ‘American Beauty’), well-functioning families that needed help from their local community to make over their home (‘Extreme Home Makeover’).

The second moral meta-theme that we defined was: *“Safety, order and justice form the basis of a structured and well-functioning society”*. The prevalence of this theme in the three genre-clusters communicates the importance of safety, order and justice as core values in our society. This is showcased in our material from different angles varying from a news-item on concerns about the declining

availability of police officers and the results it might have for public safety in Rotterdam, to entertainment-items on Dutch people serving disproportionate punishments in foreign prisons, to a fictional storyline about the FBI securing the safety of a small town from a serial killer.

The last moral meta-theme we discerned was “*Health is wealth*”. This moral theme communicates what people often report as one of the most important values in their life. This becomes apparent through the time that is spent on the theme of health or a lack of health in our material. Ranging from news-items about the swine flu or finding a donor-kidney through a newspaper add, or entertainment-items about a heroic girl with a hereditary blood-disease or a girl who was infected with HIV due to a blood transfusion, or a fictional storyline about doctors going to extremes to find a 10 year old boy new organs.

2.6 Discussion

Our first research question focused on what types of morality are represented on a night of prime time television. We found thirteen specifications for the generally termed formal, informal and intuitive morality that we started with as a sensitizing concept. We distinguished several cases where different types of morality were combined, in the *morality of care* and *consumer morality* which complicate the basic distinction between the three initial types of morality. Furthermore, we also found that problems that were discussed in an item or storyline were often a product of contrasting or competing types of morality. For example, dilemmas between professional morality and morality of social bonding, often a conflict between reason and emotion where different communities (i.e. profession and friends or family) ask different things from the individual. Our results also showcased a basic differentiation between morals that react on violations and transgressions, focused on restricting behavior and morals that are focused on ideals and values and stimulate social behavior (see also WRR, 2003, p.9). Finally, our results revealed that two types of morality were present in all genres, namely the *judicial morality* (formal) and the *iconic morality* (informal). We come to conclude that through their repetitive presence across all genres these moralities communicate the importance of society as a moral community.

Our second question focused on moral themes in one night of prime time. We found that all three main types of morality amplify and support each other when it comes to the moral core of television content. This moral core crosses boundaries of genre and program altogether and consists of three moral meta-themes focused on family, health and safety. The news-, reality-, and fiction-cluster all share storylines and items that show a focus on order and

justice to ensure public safety. The family theme also dominates all three clusters, with issues like bad parenting, parental responsibilities and the ideal of the well-functioning family. And finally, health formed a moral meta-theme for all the genre-clusters, as a problem, a value and as a context of action.

The fact that safety, health and the family form this moral core, exemplifies that these ideals are important for the continuity of the community as well as individuals. They are values and ideals to guide our actions, but also a common good and rule to confront each other. It is through this ritual repetition, even though in different genres and forms, that television communicates what is most important in society. In this sense the moral meta-themes can be seen as the heart of the myths society tells itself about itself, or as Lule (2001) defined them the core of society’s “eternal stories”. This confirms that Gerbner’s (1998) ideas about the repetition in the storytelling system that cultivates an abstract uniform core of culture are represented in moral terms as well, and that there is room for multiple contrasting or amplifying morals signaling the idea of Newcomb and Hirsch (1983/1984) of the forum-character (for example, contrasting views on justice in crime show and documentary). These moral meta-themes also exemplify what Carey meant when he stated that ritual communication is geared “toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs” (Carey, 1975, p.18). Our findings therefore also suggest that in a world where genre-preferences and niche-proliferation become part of how we watch television, it seems that viewers cannot escape its omnipresent moral core (i.e. moral meta-themes, as well as genre-crossing types of morality). Furthermore, our results are also in line with Selnow (1986/1990) who stated that television represents predominance of pro-social values, as well as with Krijnen & Costera Meijer (2005) who state that Dutch television’s moral content is pro-family, pro-civility, and pro-democracy.

Our third question asked if there were genre-specific differences in morality on a night of prime time television. We can conclude that each genre-cluster has specific types of formal, informal and intuitive morals that it represents and we saw a gradual shift in focus of these morals. Moving from the perspective of the common good, focused on the community, public order and public trust and formal moralities that were dominant, to a focus on the individual and the informal and intuitive moralities in the reality- and fiction-cluster. The role of the individual also shifts from the public and exemplary individual in the news-cluster, to the ‘everyman’ in the reality-cluster, to private persons in the fiction-cluster.

We therefore conclude that the focus of morality in news and fiction is complementary, and can be seen as two sides of the same coin. We came to this conclusion by systematically analyzing the role of the individual and the

community in all genres. In the news-cluster the focus is on problems and current affairs in the public sphere, while fiction's morality dramatizes the inner world of fictionalized private persons in the various personal and professional communities. In the news-cluster the autonomous individual is secondary to the common good; we only see public figures or icons that fulfill a function for the community. The news-cluster is a front stage of public life, where people and their personal emotions are irrelevant, unless they are collectively felt emotions (as public indignation and public protest). Fiction on the other hand, shows the backstage, where we are privy to emotions and motivations of private persons.

The reality-cluster is not excluded from this conceptualization; they form the transitory area between news and fiction. This is exemplified by the triple core of moral themes: the family strengthened and embedded in intuitive morals, the value of health which is part of our institutionalized Dutch welfare system but also culturally shared and necessary for survival, and finally the formally established safety of citizens. News and reality all show this based on real people, while fiction serves the similar purpose in a narrative with characters.

Returning to the concern that television content might negatively influence viewers' morals (Biltereyst, 2004; Krijnen, 2007; Lind & Rarick, 1992; Tavener, 2000); we come to conclude that these concerns can be tempered since we found that television acts as an echo of what is important in society. Notwithstanding the incidental "immoral" acts (in for example 'Jersey Shore', 'The Jerry Springer Show'), our results reveal television content's neutralizing and self-cleansing capacity on a broader, system-level. In other words, television, in its many genres and program forms, tells society stories about what is important in society. It showcases shared knowledge about a culture, which is recognized and acknowledged by its viewers as real and important. As such, based on our findings we believe that television should and does foster the common good, especially through its genre crossing moral themes focused on family, health and safety as well as the genre-cluster specific moral themes of for example the importance of following rules, the importance of informed citizenship and the importance of kindness, civility and solidarity.

Furthermore, television shows its viewers what constitutes good and bad behavior in different moral communities, and (more importantly) what the consequences of such behavior are in those different moral communities (with differing, overlapping and sometimes conflicting types of morality). Television thereby forms a touchstone for viewers' moral compasses, in the sense that through witnessing televised others' behaviors, and its positive or negative consequences, viewers might either reaffirm or attune the positive or negative view they had of that behavior. Through the repeated exposure to these behaviors (and their consequences) of a wide range of televised others, the rules of morality

are internalized (Bandura, 1977, 2002) and the moral compass of viewers sharpened.

As with all studies this project was not without limitations, which open up interesting avenues for future research. Even though our sample was very diverse in nature, it is also limited in number of programs. To test the durability of our results, a large scale quantitative content analysis could illustrate the presence of our moral (meta-)themes and moralities in a larger sample of programs over time. Furthermore, there is also the necessity to repeat the study in other countries/cultures and broadcasting systems, which comes forth out of the reality that the Netherlands is a relatively small country with a rather distinctive culture which could cause a cultural distinctiveness in the results. New studies in other countries might prove fruitful in either validating or extending the moral content and framework of television we described in this study.

Lastly, when we critically reflect on the product of our analysis, we conclude that morality is indeed multiple, layered and complex on television. However, since we found several types of morality that blur the boundaries between the main categories (formal, informal and intuitive), and the expectations regarding the intuitive moralities have not truly panned out, we feel that a more abstract approach to morality on television might be more fruitful for our future research. It seems that the intuitive moralities form a latent universal substructure that runs through all types of morality (a sort of general or basal level of morality), it has become intensely interwoven with especially the informal moralities and therefore loses some of its distinctive differentiating power. Future research could for example connect morality to institutions or overarching moral communities (Tipton, 2002; Zijdeveld, 2000), which makes sense especially when we take into consideration that over time society has been transformed by processes of de-traditionalization, de-institutionalization and individualization, which will most likely be reflected in television's content over time. These overarching moral communities can then be seen as the context of action, and our material already revealed institutionalized aspects of morality in dealing with the economy, politics, law and the family.

3

CHAPTER

Elaborating instruments
for assessing morality in different
television genres

3.1 Introduction

The overall goal of this dissertation is to investigate the representation of morality on television, and assess whether it cultivates a uniform moral order or functions as a forum that reflects the themes and discussions in a morally differentiated society. In order to substantiate that goal, we need to develop instruments to measure the diversity of the prime time television programming in terms of describing and analyzing various aspects of morality. In this chapter we will report on our path towards developing an instrument for quantitative content analysis of morality in prime time television.

The first study in this dissertation aimed to explore the representation of morality within one night of prime time television, as a way of further developing our sensitizing concept of morality through analysis of the empirical reality of television content. It gave us valuable insights and taught us invaluable lessons. The overarching idea was that by outlining the many aspects of morality as a concept through the first study, we could then move towards elaborating analytical categories to assess aspects of morality in a large sample of television content and describe morality categories in quantitative terms.

Moving onward from the results in the first study, the first exploratory steps towards creating a coding instrument (or codebook) to describe and analyze morality in television content were taken in the context of a seminar on content analysis (in Spring of 2010). In this methodological seminar, the focus was on the analysis of television commercials as a distinct genre (with commercials from 1980, 1995, and 2005). In this chapter we will reflect on this process of coding commercials as a genre as well as on the outcomes of the first study in this dissertation (Chapter 2), in order to elaborate and explain the steps that have led to the creation of the instrument(s) (or codebook) used in the next studies in this project. The elaboration of the instrument is based on empirical results of our study of media content, theoretical exploration of the literature on morality as well as practical experiences with coders coding the media material in training sessions.

Some results of the first study are better suited for the necessary adaptations to incorporate them in a quantitative instrument than others. Some outcomes refer to variations relevant for specific television genres and formats and they require elaboration on a more theoretical level. We will start with outlining our findings regarding the instrument used in the methodological seminar on commercials, regarding the layers of meaning found within commercials as well as the applicability and relevance of coding categories for the study of morality in prime time television.

Furthermore, when reflecting on the outcomes of the first study in this dissertation the reconstruction of the different types of morality on television was one of the aspects of morality, which proved to be a complex fit moving forward. The preliminary broad distinction in formal, informal and intuitive types of morality yielded a large palette of different (sub)types of morality. Many of these subtypes crossed the boundaries between the three overarching morality types. As a result, when moving forward in the project to quantitatively describe and analyze morality on television, realistically and practically these types of morality were too complex and entwined to use when coding a large sample of materials with multiple coders. In Tipton (2002) we found a perspective to elaborate a fitting and more adequate typology of types of morality that still matched the results from studies one. We will discuss this theoretical exploration after the elaboration on the results on commercials. The elaborated perspective on morality gave us the analytical tools to redefine the categories of the distinguished aspects of morality that should be part of the coding instrument. The first study in this dissertation confirmed that prime time television represents a plethora of different often entwined types of morality; conflicting moral themes and a variety of moral domains in which stories unfold, resulting in moral complexity in the studied programs. Moving forward we therefore incorporated the idea of *moral complexity* (the entanglement of different types of morality) in storylines, as well as a continued focus on represented *moral themes* (what is the story about in moral terms) and *moral domains* (in what domain of everyday life does it play out) in television content as aspects of morality. In the final section of this chapter we will discuss the composition and variables used in the studies discussed in Chapters 4 through 7.

3.2 Coding morality: commercials as test case

While conducting the first study, we simultaneously prepared and conducted a content analysis of morality in television commercials over time¹. In this study we concentrated on values as a central aspect of morality (e.g. *one might argue that values and norms, form a large component of morality in that the former articulates social ideals and the latter social rules which behavior is measured against*; cf. Gert, 2011; Railton, 2003; Trusted, 2002). Commercials can be seen as a vehicle of (commercial) morality since they sell ideals, values as well as images of

¹ See Appendix I, for conference paper. Results were presented at the Etmaal voor de Communicatiewetenschap in 2011. Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2011, Enschede). *Through the looking glass: an exploration of the good life as represented in Dutch television commercials*.

success, competence, worth, love, popularity, sexuality and normalcy. They present us all kinds of identities, some of which we should strive to be (Berger, 2000; Fowles, 1996; Gerbner, 1999; Leiss, Kline & Jhally, 1990; Wernick, 1991). Television commercials are argued to

...increasingly pervade our everyday lives, bombarding us with snapshots of what we supposedly lack and what we need to fill the void. What we supposedly lack typically has more to do with lifestyles, looks, and aspirations advertisers seek to associate with the products they are trying to sell than with the inherent qualities and attributes of the products themselves” (Rutledge Shields, 1997, p.71-72).

As a result television commercials model patterns of behavior that represent the so-called ‘good life’, with props, products and services for sale which will facilitate this lifestyle. This is portrayed as the ideal everyone should strive towards to lead a fulfilled and accomplished life (Pollay, 1983, 1985, 1986). To make this message resonate with the audiences and motivate consumers to action, television commercials must appeal to consumers’ interests, needs, ideals, goals, and problems, which more often than not reflect their cultural values (Bing Zhang & Harwood, 2004; De Mooij, 1998; Mueller, 1987; Pollay & Gallagher, 1990).

Morality was conceptualized in this study as the complex of ideas, ideals, norms and values that communicate value, worth and the distinction between good(ness) and bad(ness) in the conduct of man in society. We aimed to unravel morality in television commercials, in order to move towards systematic coding categories in our further study of morality in prime time.

The coding of commercials was the practical part of a specialized seminar on the methodology of content analysis for undergraduate students in Communication Science, in the spring of 2010 at the Radboud University Nijmegen. Twenty-three students were involved in the training and testing of coding instruments and they reported their experiences when applying it to different commercials. Reflection on coding problems and discussions in training sessions helped us forward in improving our procedures, variables and coding categories.

In the following section we will discuss three problems which we encountered in coding commercials needed to be addressed and solved in creating the coding instrument for our further studies. These problems were related to the layers encountered within television content and particularly the relevance of moral domains and the elusive and intangible nature of values.

3.2.1 Layered messages on the good life

Commercials are a very suitable material to teach students various aspects of coding media material, since they are relatively short in duration and can easily be watched several times. In the methodological seminar we studied a large scale, longitudinal sample of Dutch television commercials through quantitative content analysis. The sample includes 1,999 television commercials spread out over three examined years (1980, 1995 and 2005), which can be found in Table 1 in Appendix I. The commercials were chosen for their availability in an existing clustered sample of prime time television programming (19.00-23.00) from all available Dutch television channels, collected by the Media Department of Radboud University Nijmegen (Emons, 2011, p.22). The data allow for comparing characteristics of commercials from different years and television channels.

One of the results from the first study in this dissertation (Chapter 2) was that morality is represented on television by simultaneously focusing on violations and problems, as well as discussing the problems, judging the violations, suggesting solutions and presenting consequences of such behavior. The results revealed a distinction in focus on individuals as 'faces of the community' in news programs and individuals as points of focus in the fictional world that presents moral aspects, besides the moral message of general storyline of the item or program. This suggested to us, that morality is represented through its actual content (i.e. its moral messages) as well as through the people that embody that content. As a consequence, we decided to also explore who occupied the *Good Life* as an embodiment of morality portrayed in television commercials. In other words, who was seen as important enough to convey the message to viewers, i.e. who is of *moral worth*, as carriers of the commercial message.

3.2.2 Casting: Messages of moral worth

In the study of commercials, the demography (i.e. who was of *moral worth*) was explored by analyzing the gender, age, and ethnicity of the main characters and how this distribution changed over time. The casting of product users, voice-overs, and professionals shows a dominance of male characters, while over time we also find a significant decrease of female characters from 47% in 1980 to 37% in 2005 (Table 3, Appendix I). Our results are also contradictory to the findings reported in previous studies on gender in television commercials for other countries, where the share of female characters grew over time (e.g. Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Furnham & Paltzer, 2010).

For the age of the main characters the overall results show that there is an overrepresentation of characters in the middle aged category (82%), while the young (12.6%) and especially the elderly category (5.4%) are underrepresented. The distribution of age over the different categories in the Dutch television

commercials is unrealistic (and in line with previous research: Peterson & Ross, 1997; Van Selm, Westerhof & de Vos, 2007), in reality the young category makes up around 24 percent (instead of 12.6%) of the population, the middle category around 60 percent (instead of 82%) and the elderly make up around 16 percent (instead of 5.4 %) of the Dutch population in 2005 (CBS, 2010).

The ethnicity of the main characters in the television commercial world has changed very little from 1980 to 2005, and overall there is a stark overrepresentation of the Caucasian ethnicity (93.4% of all main characters). The category of Other (or non-Caucasian) in ethnicity of the main character was a combination of the different ethnic categories that were recorded, this new category was created because the percentages in the different ethnic categories were so small. There has been a significant increase in characters of a non-Caucasian ethnicity, from 3,8% in 1980 to 8,3% in 1995 and 2005 ($\chi^2 = 8.018$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). This increase however still has not matched the ethnic make-up of the Dutch population in reality, where a much more diverse ethnic palette is present. Even though the CBS (Dutch census bureau) doesn't have perfectly comparable data to match with the ethnic make-up of the television world, it is easily pinpointed that at least 10 percent of the Dutch population in 2005 is non-Caucasian (CBS, 2010).

When reviewing the results from the casting aspect of the content analysis of commercials (results are more elaborately outlined in Appendix I), it became clear that it was important to include this aspect in our studies moving forward. These dynamics of inequality in casting are well-documented for television as a whole (cf. Gerbner et al., 2002; Harwood & Anderson, 2002), and form a continuous representation of structural inequality (and the status-quo) in society and thereby convey a message of *moral worth* and importance of a group in society. The world of television commercials tells its viewers in no uncertain terms a thoroughly patriarchal racially white message: middle-aged, white men are at the epicenter of society.

In moving forward we will explore how these moral messages of over- and underrepresentation in different television genres correspond with monikers of differentiated moral nature (i.e. specifically good, bad and ambivalent). Specifically when combined with recent research interests in the supposedly omnipresent morally ambiguous characters on prime time television (cf. Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2011; Eden, Daalmans, & Johnson, 2016; Janicke & Raney, 2015; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012; Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2013; Shafer & Raney, 2012), these dynamics of demographics traits and moral worth pack an added level in the moral message represented on prime time television. As a consequence, we may conclude that the coding instrument in the next studies will be layered, as to convey both characteristics of the program and its moral message as well as the moral worth conveyed through its demography and casting of main persons or characters.

3.2.3 Commercial subject and life domains

Aside from different specifications of types of morality, the explorative study of morality in Chapter 2 describes six moral themes that were dominant in specific genre-clusters. One of these themes we discerned was *The Good Life*, especially in consumer and lifestyle programs.

For the study of commercials we tried to describe the products or brands related to this Good Life theme in terms of the domains of life that according to the commercial messages needed attention. By trial and error we succeeded in defining eleven domain categories that allowed for categorizing 97% of the products or brands presented in the commercials (with high reliability), see Appendix I. The three most dominant life domains represented in commercials in 1980 were 1: 'food and nutrition' (40.8%), 2: 'leisure time' (13.4%), 3: 'household' (10.9%), for 1995 the ranking was 1: 'food and nutrition' (28.0%), 2: 'leisure time' (14.7%), 3: 'personal appearance' (15.4%), and in 2005 the three most dominant domains were 1: 'food and nutrition' (22.1%), 2: 'personal appearance' (14.0%), 3: 'finance' (12.8%). Over time, the results reveal that there have been significant changes in the presence of various life domains in television commercials (see Appendix I, Table 4).

These results show a distinct hierarchy, as well as change, in what domains are predominant in the commercial world – in other words what is deemed as important pertains only to a relatively few aspects of everyday life (cf. Pollay, 1985). This prioritizing is also in line with the results of the first study which also outlined the importance of some life domains over others. Moving forward we feel strengthened in our resolve to include moral domains as one of our core aspects of conceptualizing morality on television. But the categories to distinguish relevant domains of life to unravel moral aspects for television programming as a whole, cannot be simply copied from the world of television commercials. In the study of commercials domains pertaining to family life (household, finance, nutrition, transportation) and personal identity (health, personal appearance) are prominent, while in fiction and the news and information genre other kinds of problems are most likely relevant. So we had to redefine the life domains on a more abstract level, so that the categories cover the life domains represented in a variety of television genres. This differentiation, based on theoretical consultation, will be outlined in the final section of this chapter.

3.2.4 Values

Above, we loosely described commercials as a vehicle of commercial morality, since they promote products and images relevant for *the Good Life*. In other words, they communicate value: they name worth, importance and what people want to or should strive for. On the one side, values are common goods in the sense that

they communicate shared idea(l)s of what is important to be done or strive for. On the other side values work as beliefs, motives and ideals that give focus to an individual's life. But in contrast to more tangible guidelines, norms, rules or laws that can be followed, values are ideals that miss concreteness and can hardly be reached or fulfilled. Since values are one of the more direct embodiments of morality in this study, and notoriously hard to code in a reliable manner (cf. Pollay, 1983), we chose to derive the coding categories in an inductive manner – similar to the approach in the first study of this dissertation.

The coding options for *values*, were derived from open coding, discussion and reflection during training sessions with coders. Open coding revealed that often two kinds of values were present in commercials, one tied to the commercial goal (i.e. the literal message) and the other to the narrative in the commercial. This is very similar to print advertising where Pollay (1985) distinguishes between the artwork and the written copy, both of which can call attention to, assert and display (different) values. This led to the decision that values were recorded in a two-step procedure, namely coding the values of the (spoken or written) message of the commercial and coding the values of the storyline represented in the commercial.

The coding categories for values were products of open coding and reflection sessions in discussing some thirty different commercials. It resulted in 6 coding options for values: *functionality*, *beauty*, *health*, *joy of living*, *individuality* and *solidarity* (see Appendix I, Table 6). These values are actually value labels that encompass a cluster of sub-values, because otherwise the number of values became too large. For example the value 'functionality' encompasses sub-values as efficiency, quality, durability, safety and price, while the value 'beauty' encompasses sub-values such as youthfulness, attractiveness and fairness.

The results revealed that a large majority (i.e. more than 75 percent) of all messages of television commercials focused on the value of functionality. Joy of living is the second most dominant value, which is in line with other studies which also report a strong presence of joy of living (i.e. happiness/joy) in the value-spectrum in commercials (Hetsroni & Aysa, 2002; Koeman, 2007). Health is the third most dominant value in the message of commercials. The prominence of functionality as a value can be linked to the commercials first-order function, which is persuasion. Functionality embodies the practical aspect of products, namely that it is a newer version, or that it is more durable, or more efficient, in essence that this product is better than others or than a previous model, which is still largely the rhetoric commercials use to sell and emphasize the value of their products (Bing Zhang & Harwood, 2004; Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Hetsroni & Aysa, 2002; Pollay, 1983). It seems that advertisers continuously implement utilitarian values (in this study *functionality*) more often than other values, since

they best communicate what it is that a product is supposed to do and a dominant presence of other values might interfere with that message (Bing Zhang & Harwood, 2004, p.160).

We concluded that we developed a reliable instrument to assess values in commercials, but that it was less effective than we wanted in teasing out the core societal values reflected in commercials (Pollay, 1983). Functionality became as it were a confounding or cloaking value that was omnipresent in the commercial world. But functionality and other categories of the instrument seem to be less relevant for the news, entertainment and fiction genres. We still believe, based on our study of one night of prime time television (Chapter 2), that values are a relevant aspect of what morality is, and how it is represented on television, although in this specific instance and conceptualization, we failed to measure values as the common ideals one has to strive for. In describing the focus of a moral message and differences between television genres in moral focus, other aspects of morality related to values, like issues or domains of everyday life, seem to be more promising to elaborate a more general level of differentiations. This brought us to reflect on our general perspective on morality, not only on the theoretical level but also as an inspiration and source for further instrumental elaborations for empirical research.

3.3 Lessons learned: aspects of morality (theoretically) defined

Both the first study reported in this dissertation on morality in one night of prime time as well as the explorations on commercials taught us valuable lessons moving forward in conceptualizing the measurement of morality for the next studies planned in this dissertation.

First, following the results of the different types of morality as described in the first study, we have come to conclude that since we found several types of morality that blur the boundaries between the proposed main categories (formal, informal and intuitive), and the expectations regarding the intuitive moralities have not truly panned out, a more abstract approach to morality on television might be warranted. It seems that the intuitive moralities form a latent universal substructure that runs through all types of morality (as a more general or basic level of morality), that has become intensely interwoven with especially the informal moralities and therefore loses some of its distinctive differentiating power. This would become problematic in devising an instrument for quantitative content analysis, in which the categories of each variable (in this case *type of morality*) need to be theoretically and empirically relevant, but also

should be logically exclusive and exhaustive (cf. Krippendorff, 2004; Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014).

In our next studies, following Durkheimian tradition in sociology, we will connect morality to societal structures (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2010), in other words we will explore morality as it is tied to societal institutions (Tipton, 2002; Zijderfeld, 2000). This path to elaborate our analytical framework is not only theoretically relevant; it seems also to be promising for the objective to assess changes in morality related to societal change over time. Considering the fact that over time society has been transformed by processes of de-traditionalization, de-institutionalization and individualization (Eisinga, Scheepers & Bles, 2012) and these changes will most likely be reflected in television's content (Emons, 2011), an elaboration of morality as tied to societal institutions seems to be obvious. Besides, societal institutions as overarching moral communities can be seen as the context of action, and explorations already revealed institutionalized aspects of morality in dealing with the economy, politics, law and the family.

Second, the idea of moral plurality as formulated in our first study on prime time television (see Chapter 2), has also been mentioned in previous studies (e.g. De Waal, 2013; Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013; Greene, 2013; Haidt, 2001; Hauser, 2006; Verplaetse, 2008). Furthermore, the outcome of multiple values incorporated in commercials can also be interpreted as a form of moral plurality in the television world. As a result our conceptualization of – and as a consequence measurement of – morality in the following descriptive studies on morality in television, needs to incorporate the idea of moral plurality as well.

Combined, this reasoning leads us to explore the literature on typologies of morality with a focus on the plurality of morality as well as a distinct tie to social institutions and moral communities. Inspired by a publication on the exploration of the relationship between values, norms and behavior by the Dutch scientific council (WRR, 2003), we elaborated on Tipton's (2002) ideal-typical styles of ethical evaluation. These styles of ethical evaluation are tied to institutions and social practices, which we redefined and elaborated into four different types of morality to be applied in the next studies in this dissertation.

Tipton's differentiation into styles of ethical evaluation, as well as his articulation of the possibility of *mixed moral meanings* (i.e. moral plurality), is relevant for our next studies because it integrates the idea that both societal institutions (e.g. the economy, politics, the family, education, etc.) and their accompanying social practices (e.g. teaching, economic exchanges, administration, health practices) embody and specify cultural values and norms in terms of what is right and wrong, good and bad, and as a consequence they represent an individuals' relationship with others in various contexts and the world at large. The evaluation styles do not simply correspond with straightforward singular

institutions or organizations, but set forth patterns of normative, moral expectations tied to larger societal contexts or institutions. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton (1991) define institutions as patterns of expected action of individuals or groups, enforced by social sanctions, both positive and negative. Institutions thus always have a moral element. Therefore, these styles of moral evaluation as proposed by Tipton (2002), and integrated in our future studies, are not simply a matter of evaluation of individual conduct, but also take into account the normative orientations of the practice of moral evaluation in various spheres of contemporary (Western) society.

Tipton's conceptualization of morality as the articulation of what is seen as good and bad and how this relates to behavior in specific contexts, as well as the idea that institutions form the context within which behavior is performed, have a good fit with our previous conceptualization of morality. Tipton's moral styles of evaluation are tied to the judgments of behavior from the vantage point of central values which are important in certain "groups" or social institutions. In his overview of moral evaluation styles (see Table 1), Tipton (2002) bundles together several institutions to a whole that cherishes a similar value-orientation, with typical social relationships, typical professions and a certain degree of prescriptivity of its behavioral rules of conduct. Internally, these institutions are integrated by a style of moral evaluation which is used to structure behavior, guide external relations and resolve conflicts. That is, *"each ethical style relies on a given social institution's structural arrangement, practices, and relationships to frame the moral activity and character it articulates, and each ethical style justifies the arrangement of social forms that embody its meaning"* (Tipton, 2002, p.21). Tipton (2002, p.16) argues that his differentiation of contrasting styles of ethical evaluation *"distinctively characterize the moral traditions that underpin American culture. These include Biblical religion, civic humanism, and two forms of modern individualism, one utilitarian and bourgeois, the other Romantic and bohemian"*. Based on Tipton's model, combined with the outcomes of the explorative studies in this dissertation, we created a typology of types of morality.

Tipton (2002, p. 38-39) discerns four ideal types of distinct styles of moral evaluation and notes that in the reality of actual institutions these types will intermix ("mixed moral meanings") depending on the social situation or institution at hand.

The first style Tipton discerns can be characterized as a style dependent on authority, which is why we label it Authoritative Morality. The authoritative moral perspective is associated with tightly knit parental institutions, prototypically the family but also in loco parentis institutions such as the military and the church as well as the nation at large. The central virtues in this type of reasoning are obedience, love and safety, while the mode of knowledge is conscience based.

This type of morality is community-centered, and values the community over the individual. As Tipton argues, *"within this social order, space and time, roles and relationships, belong to the community, not the individual"* (p.24). This is also what we encountered in our first study, with the predominant focus on the national community in news and information programs.

The second style Tipton discerns is based on rules and regulations of (bureaucratic) societal institutions, and we therefore termed this style Regulative Morality. The regulative morality, presupposes a set of social roles that are defined by obligatory roles of interaction and professional ideals of character, such as being a good doctor. The central virtues in this type of reasoning are rationality and justice, it is *"socially rooted in distinct legal-political, educational, and scientific institutions"*, and the mode of knowledge here is reason based (2002, p.24). In this we recognize most of the formal moralities we reconstructed in the first study in this dissertation, thereby intuitively validating the fit of this type of morality in the television world.

The third ethical style that Tipton describes, i.e. *"the consequential style"*, is founded on utilitarian principles of economic institutions based on the market, and we therefore termed it Market Morality. Market morality, is tied to the organizational structure that *"links free, equal, and self-interested individuals through exchange and contract, whether as buyers and sellers or investors and entrepreneurs"* (p.26). The central virtues in this type of reasoning are efficiency and maximum outcomes, while the mode of knowledge is based on cost-benefit calculations.

This type of morality is centered on the individual and his wants and needs rather than community interests: *"Hierarchical ethics of authority are undercut in the apparently natural play of universal individual interests, in turn politically curbed and framed by universal individual rights"* (p.27). In this type of morality, we recognize the logic outlined in both the economic morality as well as the consumer morality as defined in the first study of this dissertation.

The fourth and last ideal type of ethical reasoning that Tipton discerns is *"socially rooted in the leisure institutions of private life, where couples in love, circles of friends, and members of lifestyle enclaves (whether polo players or punk rockers) are linked through shared tastes and experiences of intimacy"* (p.29), which we therefore termed Expressive Morality. The central virtues in this type of reasoning are sensitivity, warmth and self-expression, while the mode of knowledge is intuition based. This type of morality then corresponds with the more intuitive moralities encountered in the first study in this dissertation, thus validating the choice for this approach.

For all styles it is proposed to include both prescriptive rules for behavior as well as ideal-values that inspire the behavior. For example the most prescriptive

Table 1 Styles of evaluation (cf. Tipton, 2002, p.22-23)

	Institutional location	Organizational structure	Social roles and relations	Degree of prescriptivity
Authoritative	Parental, familiar, military, police, totalitarian state	Chains of command, bonds of love.	Parent-child, officer-soldier, officer-suspect, and ruler-subject.	<i>Most</i> : A total institution or community commanding acts via strong group bonds and strong social classification.
Regular	Legal-political, educational, scientific, and constitutional republic	Assemblies for discussion and disciplinary debate, councils and hierarchies of expertise.	Professional colleagues, teacher-student, and citizen-representative.	<i>More</i> : Schools and political-professional bodies ordering norms and values via weak group bonds and strong social classification.
Consequential	Market economy, corporate economy, and contractarian state.	Individuals linked through exchange and contract.	Buyer-seller, investor-entrepreneur, and client-official.	<i>Least</i> : Competitive markets coordinating interest via weak group bonds and weak social classifications.
Expressive	Leisure, romance, arts, private life, and organismic utopia.	Couples in love, circles joined in intimacy and taste, and lifestyle enclaves.	Lovers, friends, artist-aesthete, and entertainer-fan.	<i>Less</i> : Freely chosen networks shaping feelings and tastes via strong group bonds and weak social classifications.

type of morality, i.e. Authoritative Morality, structures good behavior both around strict notions of tradition, obedience and hierarchy, but also includes the nurturing love, care, and reverence tied to parental care, pastoral care and (abstract) love of one's country. Furthermore, the types of morality stand for a diversity of moral outlooks a person may have in contemporary society. Modern man is encouraged to apply "moral hybrids" or mixed moral meanings if the social situation requires so.

3.4 Looking ahead: exploring variations in morality on television

The perspective, outlined above, on the typology of moralities (Authoritative, Regulative, Market and Expressive Morality) was the starting point for the final two studies in this dissertation. The first project that was undertaken after this conceptualization was an exploration of the representation of morality in television fiction over time (1985, 1995, 2005 and 2010, N = 352), against the backdrop of sociological processes of individualization. It explores whether there are differences over time in the representation of the various types of morality and other moral elements in the fictional content, and if the content has grown increasingly morally complex. The final project in this dissertation explores possible genre differences in the presence of the different types of morality and moral complexity (2012, N = 485).

In order to execute both projects, instruments (i.e. codebooks) were created to code the television content. The complete instrument used in the studies reported in Chapter 4 and 5 is included in Appendix II, and the complete instrument used in the studies reported in Chapter 6 and 7 is included in Appendix III, and the inter-rater reliabilities for all coded variables for each study are presented in Table 2. Both codebooks are relatively similar in their operationalization of central concepts; there are however some small differences due to the specific traits of certain television genres. Due to the empirically encountered layered nature of morality, we conceptualized morality on two levels: on the story or content level and in the casting and behavioral level of persons and fictional characters.

The central concept on the program level, is *type of morality* with the above outlined foursome of coding categories. Coders were not immediately asked to code the type of morality, but first needed to code several other aspects related directly to the conceptualization of morality. Firstly the coder describes in general terms what the program item or storyline is about, and is then guided through three other aspects of morality. Coders code the *moral community* (i.e. the community that judges behavior in the storyline or item), then they code *life*

domain (i.e. the sphere of life in which the item or storyline took place) and *moral theme* (i.e. what the item or storyline was about in moral terms). For fiction only the main storyline was coded in these variables, while for news and entertainment items up to ten items were coded.

The categories for *moral community* and *moral theme*, are strongly inspired by the typology of Tipton as well as the results from our first study. For moral theme there are four overarching main categories with each several subthemes, which were inductively created by pretesting on television material that was not part of the sample. For example, one of the moral themes was “Issues and problems surrounding Kinship and Identity”, that was elaborated in specific subthemes: ‘The battle between Good and Evil’; ‘Issues of Honor and Shame’, ‘Problems with Authority, and ‘Problems of Marriage or extended Family’. This analytical method was well suited to discern what moral topic was at hand, often also indicating what type of morality was central to the theme.

Earlier in this chapter we already discussed the category of *life domain*, in the context of the specialized seminar that dealt with coding commercials. However, the coding categories used for commercials cannot easily be applied to news, entertainment or fictional programming.

Therefore, when considering the coding options for life domain, we opted for an institutional approach, and based on training on television material we abstracted the following categories: Family; Law, order and justice; Politics; Health(care); Culture, education and science; Economy, finance and business; Leisure (incl. romantic/friendship) and the option Other. For the news genre and the entertainment genre (in the final study in this dissertation), the option of sports was added. The categories proved to be easily useable by coders, and proved to be exclusive and exhaustive. Finally, coders were asked to code *moral complexity*, in which they needed to asses if there was complexity due to conflicting types of morality or differing positions within one type of morality.

On the level of persons and characters, aside from demographic characteristics we coded three moral aspects for up to 8 main characters in fiction and up to 8 persons in news or entertainment items. Coders were asked to code *Transgressions*, *Consequences of transgressions* and *Moral nature*. For *transgression*, we coded if the person or character committed a transgression of the law, a professional transgression or a social transgression. Important here, is that the transgression, is marked as such by the person or character or other persons or characters within the context of the item or storyline. This is necessary in order to assess the *consequences* of the transgression, i.e. does punishment follow, is there a reward or is the consequence ambivalent. Finally, the coders coded the *moral nature* of the character, as good, bad, and ambivalent (and for the news and entertainment genre as possibly neutral). Moral nature had to be determined by behavior of the

Table 2 Levels of inter-rater reliability

Level of coding	Variables	Krippendorff's alpha (Chapter 4/5)	Krippendorff's alpha (Chapter 6/7)
General	Year of broadcast	1.00	-
	Country of origin	1.00	1.00
	Channel	-	1.00
	Genre	-	.92
Story-level	Moral domain	.88	.82
	Moral theme	.74	.74
	Moral community	.75	.87
	Authoritative morality	.83	.78
	Regulative morality	.75	.87
	Market morality	.88	.89
	Expressive morality	.80	.86
	Moral complexity	.74	.78
Cast-level	Gender	.99	.92
	Age	.86	.91
	Ethnicity	-	.92
	Moral nature	.88	.96
	Transgression	.79	.98
	Transgression of law	.83	1.00
	Professional transgression	.84	.92
	Social transgression	.80	.95
	Consequences	.79	.94

person/character (i.e. transgressions committed) as well as the verbal judgment of persons/characters of that behavior. Good persons/characters were categorized as such if they were good in their goals, motivations, intentions and other observable behavior (i.e. committed no transgressions or only minor transgression) and they received no criticism or other negative judgments from others. Bad persons/characters were categorized as such if their observable behavior could be typed as evil or bad (in goals, motivations or intentions), if they committed severe transgressions and were judged for them by others. Ambivalent persons/characters were categorized as such if their observable behavior is categorized by both good and bad with regard to goals, intentions and motivations (for example doing the wrong things for the right reasons), as exemplified by the verbal praise

of judgment from others. Neutral persons/characters have no goals, commit no transgressions and function purely as a source of (professional) information in an item (the reporter in the news broadcast, the weatherman in the news, the person informing viewers about the statistics of the stock market of the day).

All in all, the coding instruments are built up out of three elements:

1. General identification markers of the program
2. Aspects regarding the moral content of the program
3. Aspects regarding the moral casting of the program.

Due to the layered nature of moral content and moral casting in television programs, morality we believe is communicated on at least two levels. These two levels have become central to the reporting of the results in the coming chapters of this dissertation. In the following chapter (4) the moral content of fictional programs is analyzed, and changes over the 1985-2010 period are described. In Chapter 5, we discuss the results of the exploration of moral casting in fiction and the possibility of increased moral ambivalence. In Chapter 6, an analysis of possible genre differences in the presentation of aspects of moral content is presented, while Chapter 7 delves into possible genre differences in moral casting. Taken together the four chapters present a comprehensive account of the variations in the representation of morality on the level of content and casting over time (within fiction) and between genres. In the final chapter of this dissertation, we will reflect on the possibility or reality of television as a contemporary moral forum.

4

CHAPTER

Television fiction as a reflection of a changing society? Exploring the moral content of television fiction over time 1980-2010¹

¹ This chapter is submitted for publication as: Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2016). Television fiction as a reflection of a changing society? Exploring the moral content of television fiction over time 1980-2010.

4.1 Introduction

When thinking about television and its relationship with society, and more specifically society's morality, this relationship is often seen in very negative terms. The public opinion often scapegoats television for a large variety of society's social ills (Warner, 1987, p.140). The prevalence of television as a subject of our collective mistrust and disfavor is most likely a reflection of the all-encompassing pervasive presence of the medium in our homes and our perception of its possible negative influences (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013; Smith, Smith, Pieper, Yoo, Ferris, Downs & Bowden, 2006).

In the Netherlands both left and rightwing politicians frequently discuss the topic of the decline of public morality, more often than not connected to an explicit discussion about the media's detrimental effects on our norms and values. Former prime-minister Balkenende (2003) questioned and problematized societal morals, and saw this debate as "an instrument to reunite an anxious nation in a new, responsibility-centered Dutch state, to seek and find a national normative ground in the global era that raised challenges to nationhood" (Ossewaarde, 2010, p.343). However, this debate has not only (re)emerged in the Netherlands, countries around the world seem to be grappling for answers regarding a growing lack of social cohesion and a quest for causes of society's hardening social climate. This debate more often than not turns towards the media to explain the various social ills that plague contemporary society (Biltereyst, 2004; Krijnen, 2007; Lind & Rarick, 1992; Tavener, 2000).

This enduring debate is based on the assumption that the media can change both our moral compass and our moral behavior. The basal idea is that through the indirect experiences encountered through media exposure viewers might get a distorted image of what is normal, good and bad in everyday society and that the (anti-social) behaviors and their consequences represented in the media might serve as a learning behavioral model especially for younger viewers (Bandura, 1977; Gerbner, 1998). This concern in mass communication studies from an early age: for example the study into the influence of reading newspapers on anti-social behaviors by Fenton in 1911 as well as the famous Payne Fund Study in the 1929-1932 period which focused on the erosion of children's moral standards by feature films (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013, Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

As stated before, the concerns are still very present today, and can be seen in the debates surrounding (among other things) television and specifically its newer genres. Reality shows such as *Big Brother*, *Jersey Shore*, *Celebrity Rehab* and *Cheat on Me*, are judged as a corrupting influence on viewers and an illustration of the moral decay of society (Abt & Seesholtz, 1994; Biltereyst, 2004; Lundy, Ruth & Park, 2008). However, studies focused on tabloid programming (among others)

have revealed that beneath the manifest norm violations (which often trigger the previously mentioned societal concerns) there is a latent message of (genre-crossing) themes of moral importance and explorations of morally just behavior that continuously reasserts dominant societal values (Daalmans, Hijmans & Wester, 2014; Gerbner, 1998; Grabe, 2002; Klapper, 1960; Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982). These genre-crossing moral themes show that television functions on *shared meanings* and *shared beliefs* directed towards the maintenance of society over time (Carey, 1975). Taken together these studies reaffirm the idea that television serves as an echo of what society deems as important and fundamental to its identity. In this echo and through its repetition we come to understand television's socializing potential, that which Gerbner calls cultivation (2002).

However, even though television can be seen as a purveyor of society's core values, of its moralities, society has changed over time due to continuous structural changes such as individualization, institutionalization and secularization (Den Hoed & Schuyt, 2004; Tipton, 2002; Zijderfeld, 2000). Which begs the question if television's representation of morality, as an echo of societal norms and values, has also changed over time. This question will be addressed in the current study.

4.2 Changing society, changing morality: An institutional take on morality

Over the time western cultures have moved from a *gemeinschaftliche* to a *gesellschaftliche* organization of society, as well as from modernity to post-modernity. Society has changed through processes like individualization, rationalization and informalization effectively transforming society's focus from purely community-based thinking to incorporating the (absolute) importance of the individual (Aupers, Houtman & Van der Tak, 2003; Schnabel, 2004a). These changes have also had a profound effect on society's styles of ethical evaluation, based on moral traditions, which grew from a purely group focus on religion and community, to include elaborate professional and market-driven modes of moral understanding and also grew to an ethical outlook based on individual expressiveness, hedonism and pleasure (Den Hoed & Schuyt, 2004; Tipton, 2002).

When conceptualizing television as a reflection of society in its role as main storyteller and disseminator of accepted norms, behaviors and moral lessons (Gerbner, 2002), one can expect that these changes in morality will also be reflected within television programs over time (Emons, 2011). Following the results from the first study in this dissertation, we believed that it could be fruitful to connect the representation of morality on television with a conceptualization of morality as pluriform and imbedded within different institutions, i.e. institutional moralities

(as for example proposed by Den Hoed & Schuyt, 2004; Tipton, 2002, p.4; WRR, 2003), since processes of social differentiation have led to various moral traditions that underpin culture and social life. Due to institutionalization, societal institutions like education and law and order have their own distinct sets of rules, regulations and professional codes of conduct (Zijderfeld, 2000).

Based on previous research on morality and television (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013), we adhere to a multiple moralities approach and combine this with the notion that morality is intricately tied to institutions in our daily lives (Tipton, 2002; Zigon, 2008; Zijderfeld, 2000).

Tipton (2002) discerned four ideal types of distinct styles of ethical evaluation and notes that in the reality of actual institutions these types will intermix ("mixed moral meanings") depending on the social situation or institution at hand (2002, p. 38-39). We slightly adapted the typology of ethical styles for the analysis of the representation of morality in television. The first ethical style he discerns can be typed as a style dependent on authority, which is why it is termed the *authoritative morality*. The authoritative morality is associated with tightly knit parental institutions, prototypically the family but also *in loco parentis* institutions such as the military and the church as well as the nation at large (2002, p.21). Within this social order the community is central, not the individual. "It presupposes a set of social roles and relations that feature superordinate and subordinate members, whether parent and child, officer and soldier, foreman and laborer, or ruler and subject" (2002, p.21). This morality is based on the one hand on an authoritative mode of discourse and vertical relationships based on the virtue of obedience and allegiance and on the other hand on an inspiring mode of discourse based on social identity, reciprocity of nurturing, love, compassion and reverence.

The second ethical style Tipton discerns is based on rules and regulations of societal institutions, and we therefore termed this style the *regulative morality*. The regulative morality, presupposes a set of social roles that are defined by obligatory roles of interaction and professional ideals of character, such as being a good doctor. "Duties and virtues derive from principles rather than commands, and they fuse role and personality in consciously learned practices rather than ascribed statuses. Affective ties are weaker in such communities of practice than in the family" (2002, p.24). This morality is based on the virtue of reason and knowledge, fused in a discourse of professionalism.

The third ethical style that Tipton describes, i.e. "the consequential style", is funded on utilitarian principles of economic institutions based on the market, and is in this study termed the *market morality*. The market functions as one of society's largest components of moral order, as Robert Wuthnow argued (1987, p.79):

We associate the market with some of our most cherished values or moral objects. We also perceive the market in the context of symbolic boundaries defining realms of intentionality and inevitability ... An erosion of the market system may threaten the very fabric of moral commitment and challenge some cultural sources from which self-worth is derived.

The market is more than just a capitalist price mechanism, it is one way in which the participation in society is ordered. It is in buying, selling, working and consuming that individuals recognize and follow moral principles and obligations to other people beyond their immediate family and community" (Dant, 2012, p.49). Market morality, is tied to the organizational structure that "links free, equal, and self-interested individuals through exchange and contract, whether as buyers and sellers or investors and entrepreneurs" (Tipton, 2002, p.26). The focus is on individuals who choose based on calculated costs and competition, and treat all relationships (which are selected, and not given) instrumentally as allies or competitors to their specific ends (Shamir, 2008). The market has its own moral logic and framework; it "requires rules of transactions and contracts. These depend on non-contractual moral bases within the larger social order, as Durkheim argues, including more or less principled norms of commutative justice to define the equivalence of exchange" (Tipton, 2002, p.27).

The fourth and last ideal type of ethical reasoning that Tipton discerns is rooted in the leisure institutions of private life (i.e. couples, friends), in which members are connected through shared tastes and experiences, which we therefore termed the *expressive morality*. Expressive self-definition has nowadays developed into an essential and unending social practice. The individual is connected with groups that have weaker bonds than the family, and are based on personal choice and shared feelings, taste and frequent interaction rather than social duty and obedience. These weaker bonds of communality, that are central to the expressive type of morality, have also been described in other studies as "light" moral communities instead of the heavier moral communities of for example active citizenship (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2004).

Taken together these four ideal-typical ethical styles are transformed into four types of morality in this study and will form a cornerstone in our exploration of the televised representation of morality in prime time fiction over time.

4.3 Morality and the plot of prime time fiction

When studying the representation of morality on television, the connection with television fiction is easily made considering that in the storytelling-function fiction programs form the most obvious vehicles for moral lessons about society's conceptions of relevance and value. As Gerbner (1973, p.563) once stated:

Dramatic and fictional entertainment especially exhibit ritualistically repetitive social symbolic mechanisms that reveal conventionally cultivated approaches toward people and life. Unlike life, the bulk of popular fiction and drama is an 'open book'. Facts do not get in the way of its reality, which is the reality of values.

As stressed before, in the time before the mass media were instated, parents or community elders would tell stories to younger generations, like myths, to explain how the world works. Today, television acts as our main storyteller, hereby helping to integrate individuals into the established social order, next to the family and education, by offering certain models about appropriate values, behaviors, norms and ideas (Gerbner, 2005). As Gerbner (1999, 2002) pointed out, in contemporary society television fiction tells stories that illuminates the hidden dynamics of the real world, how things work, how we should judge things in life and what value they have (good, bad). By focusing on some themes more than other and some life domain more than other, television communicates what is important and valuable in our society (i.e. Gerbner, 1970, p.73: '*attention, emphasis and tendency*'). This ordering of themes and domains illustrates the moral value certain behaviors have in society, and with which moral traditions they are possibly connected, which makes it important to study these aspects as part of morality on television.

The representation of morality in television fiction will be intricately connected with the plot, which dramatizes what is seen as good and bad over a course of events (Wester & Weijers, 2006). For some time, critics and scholars have argued that the plot of television fiction has been growing increasingly complex (Mittell, 2006; Johnson, 2005a, 2005b). Plots of television drama and television comedy (sitcoms) have grown increasingly complex, through an increased number of overlapping and intertwining plots, a growing numbers of relationships and affiliations between characters and an increase in the amount of background information you need to interpret (Johnson, 2005b). On top of an increase in (interconnected) plotlines, and character information, Dant (2005, p.6) also concluded that over time television narratives have grown more complex by becoming more morally ambiguous.

To keep their audience entertained, television shows have internally developed narrative forms that avoid creating moral outcomes that are too simple, that might too easily appear to be read from a modernist code of ethics. In fact the consumer of contemporary media and perhaps in particular television is confronted with moral dilemmas that are unresolved and which demand some complex judgment on the part of the viewer.

Since the moral lesson of stories is embedded in the plot, this development has most certainly lead to more morally complex plotlines. These developments in fiction might be a reaction to society growing increasingly complex as a result of modernization and fiction mirroring these complexities (i.e. '*cultural negotiation*', Newcomb, 1988). McQuail once argued that media content is a reflection of the hopes, fears, ideals and shared values of a people, and therefore a good indicator of the state a culture is in (2000, p.305). However, this still begs the question *if* and *how* society's moral pluralism is reflected in television's arguably most openly moral narrative form.

This study will therefore explore how morality is presented in television fiction over time. This exploration will focus on several aspects of the *moral content* of prime time fiction, namely *moral themes*, *moral domains*, *moral communities*, *types of morality* and *moral complexity*. The first two aspects of morality which will be analyzed in prime time fiction over time, are *moral themes* and *moral domains*. As previously pointed out, television tells stories that illustrate the dynamics of the world, how things work, how we should judge things and what value they have (good, bad). By focusing on some themes more than other and some life domain more than other, television communicates what is important and valuable in our society (i.e. Gerbner, 1970, p.73). This ordering of themes as well as domains illustrates the moral value certain topics have in society, and how the distribution of these moral themes might have changed over time. Previous studies, on fictional programming, have revealed a predominance of moral themes such as justice and criminality, family life and health (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Gerbner, 1995; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Selnow, 1986,1990). These results give rise to the question what moral themes and what moral domains are present in prime time fiction and if this distribution changes over time.

RQ1a: Does the distribution of moral themes change over time in prime time fiction?

RQ1b: Does the distribution of moral domains change over time in prime time fiction?

Furthermore, because moralities are connected to specific "institutions" or moral communities, as the context of moral accountability, which makes it important to analyze which moral communities, are present in television (Durkheim, 1995; Hakemulder, 2000; Tamborini, Eden, Bowman, Grizzard & Lachlan, 2012; Tipton, 2002; Van Ommen, Daalmans, & Weijers, 2014). Daalmans, Hijmans and Wester (2014), concluded that television showcases many communities large and abstract (nation-state) and small and intimate (family) as the moral context of accountability for the people's actions. Morality becomes visible in the actions of individuals and evaluations of those actions by others, and more importantly through the community that holds individuals accountable for that behavior (Luckmann, 2002; Hijmans, 2010). This leads to the following research question:

RQ2: Does the distribution of moral communities change over time in prime time fiction?

The first study in this dissertation, revealed a multitude of (conflicting) types of morality in the fictional genre. The results revealed that the studied fictional programs included two types of formal morality (judicial, professional), one type of informal morality (iconic) and two types of intuitive morality (social bonding, violence). Aside from the first study in this dissertation, several other scholars have proposed that television content is filled with (often contrasting and complexly intertwined) moralities (Dant, 2012; Johnson, 2005a/b, Mittell, 2006). Combined with the results of a study by Mastro et al. (2011) which revealed the combined presence of different moral foundations (which can be seen as types of morality) in Spanish and English language soap operas, as well as with the notion of moral plurality (e.g Haidt, 2001; Tipton, 2002; Verplaetse, 2008) the following two research questions focus on the presence of different types of morality (following Tipton, 2002) and moral complexity in fiction over time.

RQ3a: Does the distribution of types of morality change over time in prime time fiction?

RQ3b: Does television fiction become more morally complex over time?

In sum, regarding morality in television content (i.e. *moral content*) this study will focus on what the most dominant moral themes and moral domains are. It will further discern who formed the moral communities, or in terms of Tipton (2002) the institutional sectors of social life, that served as beacons of accountability (i.e. since morality is in essence about being accountable for your actions to someone). These aspects combined reveal important information about the most valued (i.e. morally important) aspects of society. This part of the

study will also explore which types of morality are presented in prime time fiction, and if these moralities are conflicting (as indicator of *moral complexity*) and if this changes over time.

4.4 Method

We conducted a quantitative content analysis, based on a longitudinal sample of Dutch primetime fiction (1985-1995-2005-2010) (N = 352). Our main research goal was to discern how morality was represented on Dutch prime time fiction and if this representation had changed over time.

4.4.1 Sample

This study analyzed a large scale, longitudinal sample of Dutch television fiction through quantitative content analysis. The sample includes 352 fiction programs spread out over the four examined years (1985, *n* = 65; 1995, *n* = 87; 2005, *n* = 97; 2010, *n* = 103).

The programs were chosen for their availability in an existing clustered sample of prime time television programming from all available Dutch television channels. The clustered samples consist of all fictional programs broadcast on Dutch public and commercial networks during prime time at the beginning of autumn. The fictional programs included were all fictional with a storyline (Emons, 2011; Wester & Weijers, 2006), such as comedies, films, and soap operas. Excluded from the sample were all non-fictional programs such as animations, talk shows, sport programs, and news broadcasts. The sample from 1985 consists of drama programs broadcast on two Dutch networks (Nederland 1 and 2) in a period of four weeks. Due to the increase in the number of Dutch television channels, the number of weeks included in the 1990, and 1995 to 2010 samples were reduced to, respectively, two and one week of fictional television programs².

4.4.2 Codebook and coding procedures

In order to assess the representation of morality in fiction programs, the programs were coded on two different levels (general information and morality on story level).

² 1985: Nederland 1 en 2; 1995: Nederland 1, 2 en 3, RTL4 en 5, Veronica en SBS6; 2005: Nederland 1, 2 en 3, RTL4, 5 en 7, SBS6, Net5, Talpa en Veronica; 2010: Nederland 1, 2 en 3, RTL4, 5, 7 en 8, SBS6, Net5 en Veronica.

The first level of analysis encompassed general information about the *year of the broadcast* (i.e. 1985, 1995, 2005, 2010), and the *origin of the program* (i.e. the Netherlands, the United States, Great-Britain, France, Other, Not able to code).

The second level was focused on aspects of the *main storyline* of the fiction program (i.e. morality on *story level* - *moral content*). The choice was made to focus on one storyline per program, since the main storyline we believed would hold the most important moral information, or communicate the most prominent moral content. The main storyline was defined in this study as the storyline that takes up most of the screen time, and/or has the most characters involved in the progression of the narrative arc, and/or shows the most complexity in the problem-resolutions (Weijers, 2014; Wester & Weijers, 2006).

For the main storyline ten variables were coded. We first coded the *moral theme* of the main storyline, which was divided in four main categories (cf. Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Tipton, 2002), which each had several subcategories, which can be found in Table 1.

The main categories were based on the literature, the subcategories were a result of inductively coding fictional material that was not part of the sample. And then through extensive pretesting, reducing the subcategories so that they might be coded by coders (other than the main researchers) in a clear and reliable manner.

The final analysis was conducted on the four main categories (1-Issues and problems surrounding kinship & identity, 2-Issues and problems in organized society, 3-Issues and problems in market relations, 4- Issues and problems connected with freedom and individual expression) for the purpose of clarity.

The second variable was *moral domain* which was defined as the sphere of life in which the main storyline took place (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005). Its coding categories were 'Family', 'Law, order and justice', 'Politics', 'Health(care)', 'Culture, education and science', 'Economy, finance and business', 'Leisure (romantic/friendship)', and 'Other'.

We then coded the *moral community* (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Durkheim, 1995; Tamborini, Eden, Bowman, Grizzard & Lachlan, 2012; Tipton, 2002) for the main storyline, which we defined as a group of individuals with its own set of (behavioral) rules, obligations and commitments that individuals are held accountable to. We defined four main types of moral communities:

- 1) '*Traditional or parental communities*': communities based on blood and identity - ranging from the family unit, and other parental institutions such as the army, towards the more abstract (national) community,
- 2) '*Institutional communities*': groups within the (democratic) organization of society in institutions,

Table 1 Overview of coding categories for moral theme

Main categories of moral theme	Subdivision of moral themes
1) <i>Issues and problems surrounding kinship & identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The battle between Good and Evil- Issues or problems with Marriage and (extended) family- Issues or problems with authority- Problems or issues connected to honor and shame- Other problems or issues relating to kinship & identity
2) <i>Issues and problems in organized society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Issues or problems regarding norms and values- Issues or problems regarding decisions over life and death- Issues or problems of order, safety and justice- Issues or problems connected to solidarity and humanity- Issues or problems connected to principles of law- Issues or problems connected to professionalism- Other problems or issues relating to organized society
3) <i>Issues and problems in market relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Issues or problems connected to reciprocal trust- Issues or problems of honest competition- Issues or problems connected to efficiency and business- Other problems or issues relating to market relations
4) <i>Issues and problems connected with freedom and individual expression</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Issues or problems connected with freedom and personal growth- Issues or problems connected with love and romance- Issues or problems connected with friendship- Issues or problems connected with pleasure, hedonism- Issues or problems with collective experience- Other problems or issues relating to freedom and individual expression
5) <i>Other (open category)</i>	

- 3) *'Market related communities'*: communities based on reciprocated (self)interests with a focus on success and capitalist thrift and trust, and
- 4) *'Chosen, light communities'*: communities based on individual choice of participation based on tastes and (romantic /friendly) relations .

The coding of the presence (yes/no) of the different types of morality (based on Tipton, 2002): *authoritative morality*, *regulative morality*, *market morality* and *expressive morality* formed variables four through seven.

The eight variable that was coded was *moral complexity*, in which coders coded: 'No, moral complexity', 'Moral complexity: within one type of morality', 'Moral complexity: juxtaposition of two or more types of morality' or 'Moral complexity: conflict between two or more types of morality'.

4.4.3 Coder training and reliability

Six coders (four female and two male third year Communication Science students) aided the researchers in developing and fine-tuning the coding instrument by reporting their experiences when applying it to different fiction programs. After several weeks of discussion, around twenty-five hours of intensive in-class coder training as well as independent practice on programs that were not part of the sample, and reliability checks, they coded (up to) a forty-five programs each. The coders worked individually, and twenty percent ($n = 84$) of the programs in the present sample were double-coded. Coders consulted the primary researcher when there was disagreement, which was then resolved by the researcher. Based on this overlap the levels of inter-rater reliability were calculated using the macro by Hayes (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007) which is reported in Table 2. Taking Krippendorff's criteria for acceptable (.67) and good (.80) inter-rater reliability (2004, p.241), the Krippendorff's Alpha's were satisfactory overall, ranging from .74 to 1.00.

Table 2 Levels of inter-rater reliability

Level of coding	Variables	Krippendorff's alpha
<i>General</i>	Year of broadcast	1.00
	Country of origin	1.00
<i>Story-level</i>	Moral domain	.88
	Moral theme	.74
	Moral community	.75
	Authoritative morality	.83
	Regulative morality	.75
	Market morality	.88
	Expressive morality	.80
	Moral complexity	.74

4.5 Results

The sample consisted of 352 fictional programs of which the main storylines were coded in this study. The sample contained: 107 (30.4%) programs of Dutch origin, 214 (60.8%) programs of American origin, 4 (1.1%) programs of German origin, 19 (5.4%) programs of British origin, 6 (1.7%) programs of French origin and 2 (0.6%) programs of other origin.

The results will be presented in the order of the research questions they aim to answer, first the distribution of moral themes in the storylines over time, followed by moral domains, moral communities, types of morality and moral complexity.

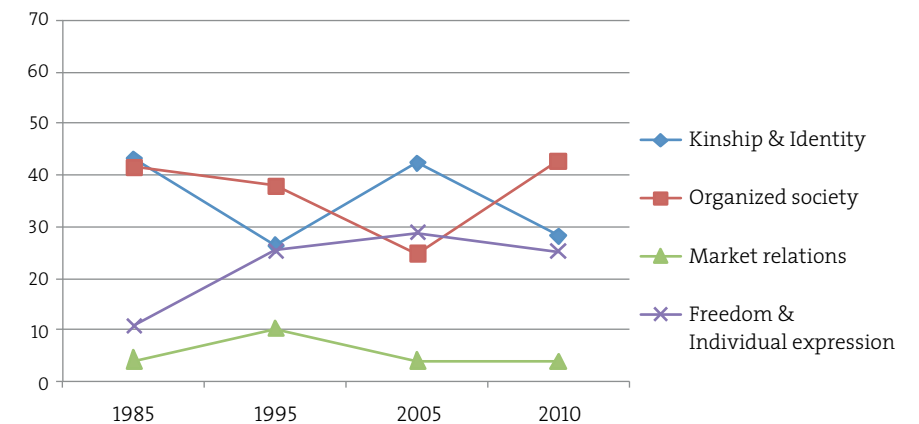
Moral themes

The most dominant moral themes overall were order, safety and justice as a problem of the organized society ($n = 92$, 26.1%), love and romance as a problem of individual expression ($n = 42$, 11.9%), and marriage and (extended) family as problems of kinship and identity ($n = 86$, 24.4%).

In order to provide a clear overview of the changes in moral themes over time, the subcategories of moral theme were collapsed and the four main types – 1) problems and issues relation to kinship and identity, 2) problems and issues within the organized society, 3) problems and issues of market relations 4) problems and issues related to freedom and individual expression were analyzed over time (see Figure 1). For the moral theme it is clear that overall problems and issues related to *kinship and identity* ($n = 121$, 34.4%) and *organized society* ($n = 128$, 34.6%) are the most prevalent, followed by problems and issues relating to *freedom and individual expression* ($n = 83$, 23.6%) and a very small portion of storylines focused on problems and issues of *market relations* ($n = 20$, 5.7%). When analyzed over time, the results reveal that there is a significant change in the distribution of the themes over the four main categories over time ($\chi^2(12, N = 352) = 28.441$, $Cramer's V = .143$, $p < 0.01$).

The most obvious change is in the category of problems and issues relating to freedom and individual expression, which doubles over time from 10.8% in 1980 to 25.2% in 2010. In evaluating the adjusted standardized residuals, it is revealed that overall the frequencies for moral themes are relatively stable over time and fall within the expected parameters. However, issues and problems relating market relations exceed expected frequencies in 1995 (10.3%, adjusted residual = 2.2, $p < 0.01$), while issues and problems relating to organized society shows a dip in 2005 and fall below expected frequencies (24.7%, adjusted residual = -2.8, $p < 0.01$), and issues and problems relating to freedom and individual expression fall below expected frequencies in 1985 (10.8%, adjusted residual = -2.7, $p < 0.01$).

Figure 1 Overview of presence of moral themes per year



Moral domains

As can be seen in Table 3, overall the most dominant moral domain present in the main storyline is the domain of Family (28.7%), followed by Law, order and justice (24.4%) and Leisure, romance and friendship (23.6%).

Overall, these three domains comprise more than three quarters of all major storylines in the 352 analyzed programs. This pattern remains the same in each year, with only some minor fluctuations. Over time, there are marginally significant changes in the distribution or importance of moral domains in the analyzed storylines ($\chi^2(21, N = 352) = 32.403$; $Cramer's V = .175$; $p = .053$).

Specifically, the domain of law, order and justice, increases significantly in 2010 (adjusted residual = 2.4, $p = 0.053$), going from 24.6% in 1985 through a dip of 16.5% in 2005 and then a rise to 33.3% in 2010. Two other domains also reveal frequencies that exceeded expectations, namely Politics which is non-existent in all years as a domain except for 1995 (3.4%, adjusted residual = 3.0, $p = 0.053$) and the non-descript category of Other as a domain in 2005 (16.2%, adjusted residual = 2.1, $p = 0.053$).

All in all it seems that the majority of fictional storylines, regardless of the year they are broadcast in, are focused on a select few domains. Thereby revealing the importance of family, law, order and justice and leisure, romance and friendship for the fictional world.

Table 3 Overview of presence of moral domains per year

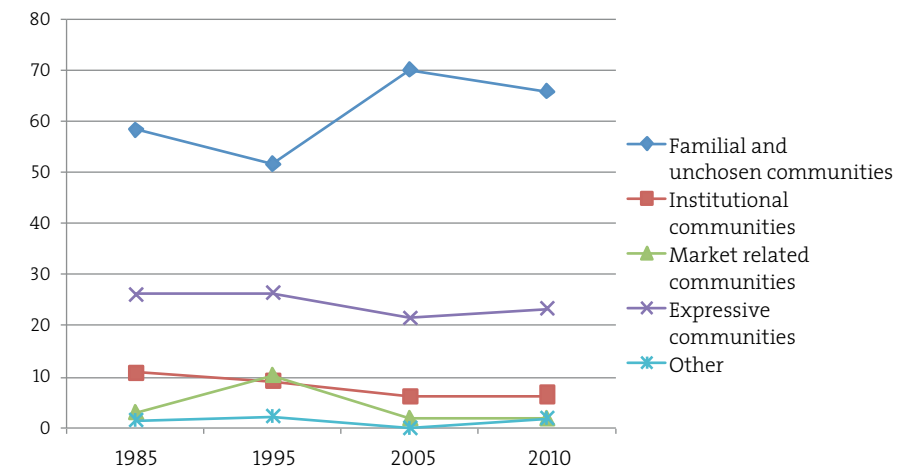
	1985		1995		2005		2010		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Family	35.4	23	26.4	23	33.0	32	22.3	23	28.7	101
Law, order and justice	24.6	16	23.0	20	16.5	16	33.0*	34	24.4	86
Politics	0.0	0	3.4*	3	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.9	3
Health(care)	3.1	2	8.0	7	5.2	5	5.8	6	5.7	20
Culture, education and science	1.5	1	0.0	0	1.0	1	0.0	0	0.6	2
Economy, finance and business	7.7	5	9.2	8	3.1	3	2.9	3	5.4	19
Leisure, romance and friendship	20.0	13	21.8	19	24.7	24	26.2	27	23.6	83
Other	7.7	5	8.0	7	16.5*	16	9.7	10	10.8	38

Note: $\chi^2 (21, N = 352) = 32.403$; Cramer's $V = .175$; $p = .053$

*Frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals.

Moral community

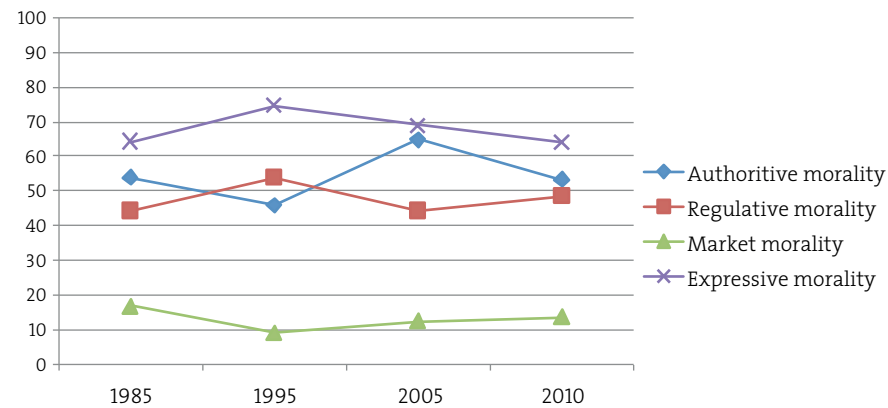
Overall, the familial and unchosen communities were the most dominant (62.2%), followed by the expressive communities (24.1%) then the institutional (8.0%), market related communities (4.3%) and other communities (1.4%) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Overview of presence of moral communities per year

In each year, except for a slight dip in 1995, the familial and unchosen communities claim moral authority over more than two thirds of the storylines. As a beacon of accountability they are followed by the expressive communities which claim around a quarter of the accountability in each year. The market related, institutional and other communities claim the rest of the accountability, which per category per year is never more than ten percent. All in all, over time there are no significant changes in the distribution of moral communities, signifying a stable landscape of moral accountability ($\chi^2 (9, N = 352) = 15.045$, Cramer's $V = .127$, $p > .05$).

Types of morality and moral complexity

In the 352 programs that were analyzed, the authoritative morality was present 193 times (54.8% of the coded storylines), the regulative morality was present 169 times (48% of the coded storylines), the market morality 45 times (12.8% of the coded storylines) and the expressive morality 240 times (68% of the coded storylines). In the 352 programs, 647 different instances of morality were coded. This means that on average, a storyline contained 1.8 types of morality.

Figure 3 Overview of presence of different types of morality in storyline per year

Overall and over time, the expressive morality is the most dominant in each year, followed by the authoritative morality, then the regulative morality and lastly the market morality. The results of the presence of the four types of morality over time are reported in Figure 3.

Over time there were no significant differences in the presence of any of the types of morality: authoritative morality ($\chi^2 (3, N = 352) = 6.874$, *Cramer's V* = .140, $p > .05$), regulative morality ($\chi^2 (3, N = 352) = 2.098$, *Cramer's V* = .077, $p > .05$), market morality ($\chi^2 (3, N = 352) = 2.079$, *Cramer's V* = .077, $p > .05$) or expressive morality ($\chi^2 (3, N = 352) = 2.927$, *Cramer's V* = .091, $p > .05$).

As can be seen in Table 4, it seems that overall in only 50 (14.2%) of the programs there was no moral complexity (e.g. only one type of morality was present), in 74 (21.0%) programs there was complexity within one type of morality, in 44 (12.5%) programs the moralities were juxtaposed (e.g. were of equal importance) and in 184 (52.3%) programs two or more moralities were in conflict.

Over time, the proportional presence of stories with no moral complexity decreases from 21.5% in 1985 to 16.5% in 2010, which indicates that over time the complexity of storylines either through complexity within one type of morality or conflicting moralities has significantly increased ($\chi^2 (9, N = 352) = 30.658$, *Cramer's V* = .170, $p < 0.001$).

Overall, the results revealed that for fiction over time there were no significant changes in the moral landscape of television regarding *moral communities* or *types of morality*. For *moral themes*, *moral domains* and *moral complexity* there were significant changes in the distribution over time. This combination, reveals that with regard to moral content the fictional world reveal both *stability* and

Table 4 Presence of moral complexity

	1985		1995		2005		2010		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
No moral complexity	21.5	14	4.6	4	15.5	15	16.5	17	14.2	50
Complexity in one type of morality	6.2	4	29.9	26	21.6	21	22.3	23	21.0	74
Moralities juxtaposed	23.1	15	5.7	5	9.3	9	14.6	15	12.5	44
Conflicting moralities	49.2	32	59.8	52	53.6	52	46.6	48	52.3	184

Note: $\chi^2 (9, N = 352) = 30.658$, *Cramer's V* = .170, $p < 0.001$

change in moral terms over time. Perhaps signifying that the fictional world is simultaneously a stable moral message system and a moral forum, echoing the results found by Daalmans, Hijmans and Wester (2014) as well as theoretical notions about the nature of television formulated by Gerbner (2005) as well as Newcomb and Hirsch (1983/1984).

4.6 Discussion

The aim of the current study was to analyze the representation of morality in television fiction over time. It focused on the representation of moral content, through an exploration of moral themes, moral domains, moral communities, types of morality and the degree of moral complexity.

The exploration of moral themes represented in prime time fiction revealed, that overall the themes of order, justice and safety, love and romance and family were the central theme in two thirds of the storylines. These results are partly in line with previous research which specified safety, health and family as important themes (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Krijnen, 2007; Selnow, 1986/1990; Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982). Over time, when analyzed on a more compact level, there were some changes but not a very clear pattern. It became clear that overall and over time, problems and issues relating to market relations played a very minimal role in the fictional world. This is contrary to the results found by Hastall, Bilandzic and Sukalla (2013) who reported that professional problems and norm violations were present in almost one third of the fictional

content they analyzed. Furthermore, the results revealed an increase of problems and issues relating to freedom and individual expression which might be television content mirroring the societal processes of individualization. The thematic category of problems and issues relating to kinship and identity shows a rather erratic drop and then increase pattern over time and the thematic category of problems and issues relation to organized society decrease until 2005, and then increases in 2010. In sum, an increased importance of problems and issues relating to freedom and individual expression, and a more erratic pattern for the other two main thematic categories. The increased importance of the thematic category of freedom and individual expression, could be interpreted as a televised echo or mirror of the increasing individualization of society (Aupers, Houtman & Van der Tak, 2003; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Emons, 2011; Rosengren, 1981; Schnabel, 2004a).

Similar to, or more likely in tandem with, the selection of themes that were dominant overall, a similar pattern is apparent for moral domains. Overall, two-thirds of the main storylines centered on three specific domains: law, order and justice, family and leisure, romance and friendship. Over time, there are some marginally significant changes, but the picture of dominant domains does not change radically. The results for both moral themes and domains suggest that overall television fiction reveals focuses on a limited number of aspects of daily life, and even though there are some small changes over time for both these do not alter this picture of the importance of justice and safety as well as interpersonal relationships (family, romance and friendship). These are largely in line with the genre-specific as well as genre-crossing moral concerns reported by earlier work on moral topics in television fiction (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Emons, 2011; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Selnow, 1986, 1990). It seems that the moral core of the content of television fiction is relatively stable over time, indicating that television fiction as a message system (as conceptualized by Gerbner, 1969) continuously echoes what is important to society. Hereby establishing that through the ritually communicated importance of specific moral domains and themes television fiction works "toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs" (Carey, 1975, p.18).

In the exploration of moral communities as beacons of accountability we found that the landscape of moral accountability proved to be very stable and unchanging over time. The familial and unchosen communities were the most dominant overall and over time. In line with the importance of family as domain as well as theme, these results seem to indicate a predominance of the family as beacon of accountability in the fictional realm. Thereby possibly mirroring the continued importance of the family as cornerstone in (Dutch) society, which is

contrary to the increased societal importance of the individual communicated in the results of moral themes (Costera Meijer & Van Vossen, 2005; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005, Lash, 1977).

This study further focused on analyzing the ways in which society's moral pluralism would be mirrored and represented in the representation of different types of morality and moral complexity in fiction over time (Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2013; Greene, 2013; Haidt, 2001; Hauser, 2006; Tipton, 2002; Verplaetse, 2008). What we found was that the expressive morality was most dominant morality overall and over time, thereby indicating that the process of individualization had firmly set the moral tone of reasoning in television fiction even before the first date in our study.

Based on the idea of mixed moral meanings in reality (*moral pluralism*, Tipton, 2002), as well as the presumption that fiction had structurally become more morally ambiguous and complex (Dant, 2005; Johnson, 2005a, 2005b; Mittell, 2006) the presence and evolution of moral complexity was explored in the current study. We explored this potential increase in moral complexity by analyzing the presence of juxtaposing or conflicting different moralities or showing complexity within one type of morality (characters taking up different moral positions within one style of moral reasoning). The results seem to suggest that the world of television has indeed grown more complex between 1985 and 2010, through the decreasing of storylines with no complexity and increase in complexity in one type, and conflicting moralities. An important side-note here is that the proportional highpoint of conflicting moralities was not in 2010 but in 1995 - where 1/3 of the storylines included complexity in one type of morality and almost two-thirds showcased conflicting moralities. In all, the results in this study, reveal a fictional world which has grown more morally complex. These results are in line with Johnson (2005a, 2005b), Mittell (2006) and Dant (2005, 2012) who argued that the plots of television drama and television comedy (sitcoms) have grown complex, through an increased number of overlapping and intertwining plots, a growing numbers of relationships and affiliations between characters and an increase in the amount of background information you need to interpret.

Overall, it seems that societal changes such as individualization are mirrored to some extent in the moral content of television fiction (*in line with* Emons, 2011). With regard to themes the results revealed a growth of the more individualized themes indicating increased importance, however they were almost always matched by either themes of kinship and identity or themes relating to organized society. In other words, themes resonating the importance of the individual and his or her choices (individualization) were not increasingly more important than the other two over time. The moral domains were stable over time, indicating the

importance of justice, family and leisure, romance and friendship. Over time the expressive morality, the most individualized morality was dominant, even though the regulative and authoritative moralities were also present in around half of the programs. In line with the presence of the authoritative morality, it was the familial and unchosen communities that served as beacons of accountability in two-third of the programs. This finding is in seeming contrast with the dominant presence of the expressive morality which would lead to a prediction of a predominance of expressive communities. These seemingly contrasting concurrences in the data, echo the theoretical notions of television as a coherent, stable and conservative message system while simultaneously also embodying television as a moral forums of opposing and differing moral viewpoints (Gerbner, 1969; Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983/1984). Nevertheless these complexities also point to the necessity of complementing future quantitative studies with qualitative studies to better and more fully understand these complexities.

4.7 Limitations and directions for future research

As with all studies this project was not without limitations, which open up interesting avenues for future research. The choice to limit the coding to only the main or major storyline in the fictional program, has left a plethora of moral content un-coded. Even though this study built on the idea that the main storyline would contain the most important moral content, due to the fact that the most screen time and a large part of the cast was connected to this storyline, part of the moral message of television fiction was not captured. This might also explain some marked differences in the results between the current study and previous research, such as the limited presence of problems tied to the world of finance and work in our results and the fairly prominent presence of work related problems and violations in the study by Hastall et al. (2013). Possibly, the work related problems were not at the heart of conflict in the main storyline coded in this study, but were present in the material in secondary storylines. In all, due to the choice of coding only the main storyline for each fictional program the results do not present the complete picture of moral content of television fiction over time.

Furthermore, the number and (commercial) nature of different channels in the subsamples for each year might have affected the results. For example, commercial channels might have presented more morally sensationalist themes as exciting plot devices in order to attract viewers than publicly funded stations. Differentiation by channel funding would therefore be an interesting avenue for future research. Lastly, the study was conducted in the Netherlands, which

despite its diversity is a relatively small and managed market, which may affect the translation of the results to a free market situation.

Future studies might also explore the representation of morality in moral content in other genres than television fiction. Recently more and more attention from a cultivation perspective has been given to the possibility of genre-specific cultivation effects (Cohen & Weimann, 2000; Grabe & Drew, 2007). Following the idea put forth by Hawkins and Pingree (1981) that different TV genres may cultivate different views of the world, research has revealed large differences between genres (Gomes & Williams, 1990; Pennekamp, 2011), and these differences might also reveal themselves in the moral content.

Despite its limitation, the presented study provides a first empirical base for further research into the presence and prevalence of specific moral content in fiction and other media entertainment. More research is needed to disentangle the complex results regarding moral content, by for example comparing fiction with other genres. Finally, regarding the moral message television fiction conveys through the behavior of its characters and the themes it approaches we can conclude that in line with the first study in this dissertation, and studies conducted by Grabe (2002) and Costera Meijer and Krijnen (2007): television fiction reproduces and maintains the importance of moral values which critics argue are being lost.

5

CHAPTER

The good, the bad and the ambivalent? Analyzing the moral nature of fiction characters over time (1985-2010)¹

Recently, the public eye and the academic community have started to focus on the presence and effects of morally ambivalent characters in television fiction. Both assume a prevalence of these characters, but neither is based on more than anecdotal evidence. This study explores the longitudinal changes (1985-2010) in the moral nature as well as the socio-demographic characteristics of the cast of television fiction aired during prime time in the Netherlands, through content analysis (N = 352).

¹ This study has been published in Dutch as: Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2016). Morele Ambivalentie en narratieve complexiteit: De morele aard van fictiepersonages op de Nederlandse televisie (1985-2010). *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap*, 44(1), 63-83.

5.1 Introduction

The concern about television content negatively impacting viewers is not new, it is a topic that is recurrently present in public discussions as well as scientific endeavors (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013). Since the Payne Fund Studies in the 1930s, which explored the erosion of the moral standards of the young through exposure to films, this concern has been prevalent in much research (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Even more recent research into television consumption in general, into specific television genres (i.e. talk shows, soaps) as well as specific programs (i.e. *House M.D.*, 24) are grounded one the one hand in fears of the (im)moral effects the content might have for viewers or on the other hand a conscious effort to alleviate and negate these concerns and view television from a more positive vantage point (Abt & Seesholtz, 1994; Krijnen, 2007; Lundy, Ruth & Park, 2008; Tamborini, Weber, Eden, Bowman & Grizzard, 2010; Tavener, 2000; Van Ommen, Daalmans & Weijers, 2014).

A new addition to this age-old concern was noted by both television critics and scholars, namely the dramatic increase in morally ambivalent lead characters in contemporary television fiction (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2011; Janicke & Raney, 2015; Krakowiak, 2008; Krakowiak and Oliver, 2009; Raney, 2004; van Ommen, Daalmans, & Weijers, 2014). These morally ambivalent characters (MACs) have seemingly become more and more present in popular television fiction, such as *The Sopranos*, *Dexter*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, and *House MD* as well as recent films *The Dark Knight*, *Django Unchained* and *Gran Torino*. More importantly, not only critics but audiences love these characters and they turn out in droves to watch week after week of the trials and tribulations of these new prime time heroes (Barbier, 2014; Fulford, 2014; Howard, 2006; Garret, 2010; Kerr, 2012). The concerns about these MACs are tied to the idea that traditionally television fiction has focused on affirming and rewarding good characters and punishing and bringing to justice evil and transgressive characters (Gerbner, 1995; Raney & Bryant, 2002), and thereby conveying moral justness and moral certainty. However these “simple” moral lines have become blurred with the rise of the morally ambivalent character (MAC) who portray both good and bad behavior, and are not necessarily punished for bad behavior. From the vantage point of both social learning theory and cultivation theory, the unpunished bad behavior is seen as worrisome (Hastall, Bilandzic, & Sukalla, 2013).

Even though concerns about these characters are ample, data on the prevalence of MACs is absent. Therefore the suggested transformation of the cast of television fiction towards a more morally ambivalent group of characters is what will be explored in this study. Several case studies, focusing on this prevalence of the morally ambivalent main characters in television fiction, have illustrated

variations of the type such as the anti-hero, the tragic villain and the gangster hero (Bokiniec, 2011; De Wijze, 2008; Donnelly, 2012; Harris, 2012; Imre, 2009; Keeton, 2002; Krakowiak, 2010). However, most of the interest of the academic community in the morally ambivalent character is fairly recent and has mostly been part of an endeavor to better understand media enjoyment, and not the prevalence of these characters or the influence they have on public morality (Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2011; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012; Raney, 2004). Most of the studies, grounded in the 'Affective Disposition Theory' (ADT, Zillman & Bryant, 1975), find that moral considerations are central to character liking which then influences our enjoyment (Raney, 2004; Shafer & Raney, 2012). Based on the ADT formula, viewers acting as *untiring moral monitors* would and should disapprove of ambivalent characters' actions, thereby hindering their enjoyment. However, empirical data agrees with popular opinion that this is not the case. Recent studies show that viewers really do enjoy morally ambivalent characters and the imaginative world they inhabit (Bailey, Tsay-Vogel, Krakowiak, & Ivory, 2013; Janicke & Raney, 2015; Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2013; Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2014; Raney & Janicke, 2013; Raney, Schmid, Niemann & Ellensohn, 2009).

Given the focus of the academic community on the possible effects morally ambivalent characters might have on enjoyment and the prevalence of these characters this suggests, it seems strange that there are actually no systematic studies of the actual prevalence of these characters in the television landscape. The assumption that there has been a surge in morally ambivalent characters on television is based on critical speculation on the side of television critics and evidence from mostly impressionistic case studies. These studies are mostly focused on a single show with an ambivalent main character, but viewers are often exposed to multiple programs with large casts over the course of evenings of prime-time viewing. Furthermore, there is no information about the types of characters who are more likely to be ambivalent (i.e. the characteristics of a morally ambiguous character). Given that viewers wishfully identify with characters similar to themselves in terms of socio-demographic variables (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Rai & Holyoak, 2013; Tian & Hoffner, 2010), and also that audiences often select programs based on genre conventions, taking these factors into account will help highlight the role and position of morally ambiguous characters in television fiction. As such the current study is focused on is exploring and describing the changes in television fiction over time regarding the moral nature of its main characters (i.e. *moral casting*, cf. Gerbner, 1995).

5.2 Theoretical Frame and research questions

When studying the representation of morality on television and the moral nature of television characters, the connection with television fiction is easily made considering that in the storytelling-function fiction programs form the most obvious vehicles for moral lessons about society's conceptions of relevance and value (Gerbner, 1969). In the time before the mass media were instated, parents or community elders would tell stories to younger generations, like myths, to explain how the world works. Today, television acts as our main storyteller, hereby helping to integrate individuals into the established social order, next to the family and education, by offering certain models about appropriate values, behaviors, norms and ideas (Gerbner, 2005). As Gerbner (1999/2002) pointed out, in contemporary society television fiction tells stories that illuminates the hidden dynamics of the real world, how things work, how we should judge things in life and what value they have (good, bad). These lessons are communicated through its characters and their trials and tribulations (Gerbner, 1995). In other words, television fiction and its characters tells us "about life, people, places, striving, power, fate and family life. It presents the good and the bad, the happy and sad, the powerful and the weak, and lets us know who or what is a success or a failure" (Signorielli & Morgan, 2001, p. 335). As viewers we are exposed to (fictional) professional problems, norms and values of doctors and nurses, detectives and lawyers, and how their lives unfold in an everyday context. As such television content can be seen as a continuous reflection on behavioral norms, values and customs in society (Klapper, 1960; McQuail, 2000).

In this study we conceptualize morality as: (societal) guidelines for action based on principles of good, bad and desirable (Dupuis, 1980; Gert, 2011; Luckmann, 2002; Hijmans, 2010). The expectation is that morality is visible and recognizable in the actions of individuals, and more specifically the following evaluations and judgments about this conduct by others as part of a moral community (Bandura, 2002; Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Durkheim, 1995; Grabe, 2002; Hijmans, 2010; Luckmann, 2002). It could be about behavior that is not in accordance with the law, or behavior that is expected in a professional context, or just the (unspoken) rules and customs of civility that dictate how people engage with each other both the public and in private. A character is typed a good, bad or ambivalent by the viewer over the course of the narrative, based on how he or she behaves, what motivates their behavior, in which context the events unfold and how other characters approve or disapprove of the portrayed behavior. Morally just and good characters will most likely be praised for their behavior and accomplishments, while the morally unjust or bad characters will most likely be condemned or punished (Raney & Bryant, 2002). However, the lines of

morality might not always be that simple: the caring and self-sacrificing mother might lie to her neighbor, cheat on her husband or misbehave in traffic. Morally ambivalent characters display both good and bad behavior, which others will comment and reflect on in a praising as well as condemning manner (Shafer & Raney, 2012). Morally ambivalent characters receive praise for example for work well done but also criticism for their failures, for example a hugely successful businessman who is a tyrant to his employees or a surgeon who saves lives but does not adhere to the any professional rules or guidelines.

In a time where television is still associated with the erosion of public moral standards (Costera Meijer & Krijnen, 2007; Grabe, 2002), it is interesting to explore this association from the vantage point of the wildly popular morally ambivalent character who displays both moral and immoral behavior. This study therefore aims to describe the changes in television fiction over time (1985-2010) regarding the moral nature of its main characters (i.e. *moral casting*, Gerbner, 1995). The first step in the exploration of *moral casting* is to discern if there truly is an increase in morally ambivalent characters in fiction over time, or if the so-called rise of these characters is overstated. This leads to the first research question of this study:

RQ 1: *Does the distribution of characters with various moral natures (i.e. good, bad and ambivalent) change over time?*

Research has shown that the television world overrepresents certain demographic groups (i.e. adult men), while it underrepresents others (i.e. women, the elderly), which begs the question if moral nature of characters is similarly distributed over these groups (Koeman, Peeters, & D'Haenens, 2007; Emons, Wester, & Scheepers, 2010; Segijn, Bartolomé, Pennekamp, & Timmers, 2014; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). Research into the traits of perpetrators of anti-social acts revealed that of the antisocial activities committed in prime time television the majority was committed by males, Caucasians and adults (Potter & Vaughan, 1997). This combined with the results of the work done by Gerbner (1995) and colleagues, which argued that the majority of villains is male, provides some initial direction of the possible associations of moral nature and gender. Furthermore, even though some claim that most of the morally ambivalent characters (MACs) in (popular) television fiction seem to be males (Jonason, Webster, Schmitt, Li, & Crysel, 2012; Rosenberg, 2012), there has been no empirical research to validate that claim.

Furthermore, when considering the fears concerning viewers moral judgments becoming more relaxed as a result of seeing moral ambivalence and moral relativism, coupled with the notion that people tend to emulate those who are like themselves it becomes important to assess what socio-demographic characteristics morally ambivalent characters have (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Rai &

Holyoak, 2013; Tian & Hoffner, 2010). This leads to the following research question of this study:

RQ 2: *Is there an association between the moral nature of characters and their gender and age, and does this change over time?*

Television articulates and reveals the moral nature of its characters through their actions, and more importantly how they are judged and punished for those actions by the various communities they are a part of (Grabe, 2002; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Potter & Ware, 1987). Daalmans, Hijmans and Wester (2014) discerned that morality was connected to the actions of people and characters, either through transgression of commonly shared laws, norms and values or by exemplifying commonly shared ideals by their behavior. The idea that televised morality is intricately connected with transgressions of norms and values, has also been argued by Grabe (2002). She stated that in the representation of the transgression of commonly shared norms and values, and the following rebuttal and retribution for those transgressions, television distinctively draws the lines of right and wrong. Specifically focusing on 'The Jerry Springer Show', which has been heralded as "the worst program in the history of television" (Hedegaard, 1998), Grabe concludes that critics fail to see that below the manifest norm violations there is a latent message that continuously reasserts dominant societal values. These results lead to the next two research questions in this study, focusing on the association between character morality and the committing of transgressions and the following punishment of those transgressions as an exemplification of the moral nature of the characters. And also if there is a change over time in transgressions as well as punishments over time.

RQ 3: *Is there an association between the moral nature of characters and the types of transgressions they commit, and does this change over time?*

RQ 4: *Is there an association between moral nature and the punishment that follows transgressions, and does this change over time?*

Lastly, the fictional programs that are mentioned by critics and studied when focused on morally ambivalent characters are mostly American. This begs the question if the suggested shift in morally ambivalent characters is a specifically American phenomenon, or if fiction programs from other countries might feature a similar shift in character nature over time. The Dutch (prime time) television landscape is perfectly suited for this comparison, since it hosts both Dutch fiction programs, an abundance of American made fiction as well as a host of fictional programs from neighboring countries (Belgium, Germany, and Great-Britain).

As Kuipers (2008) reported in her study on American fiction on Dutch television, in 1997 American fiction comprised about a third of the fiction programs on the public channels and 79 percent of the fiction on commercial channels. Furthermore, most Dutch people speak English and Dutch fluently, and Dutch viewers have a preference for subtitles rather than dubbing, thus viewing patterns are shared between English language and Dutch language programming (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000; Danan, 2004) This leads to the last research question in this study:

RQ 5: Is there a difference in moral makeup of the cast of prime time fiction from various countries, and has this changed over time?

5.3 Method

We conducted a quantitative content analysis, based on a longitudinal sample of Dutch prime-time fiction (1985-1995-2005-2010) (N = 352). Our main research goal was to discern what the moral nature was of characters in Dutch prime time fiction and if this representation had changed over time.

5.3.1 Sample

This study analyzed a large scale, longitudinal sample of Dutch television fiction through quantitative content analysis. The sample includes 352 fiction programs spread out over the four examined years (1985, $n = 65$; 1995, $n = 87$; 2005, $n = 97$; 2010, $n = 103$).

The programs were chosen for their availability in an existing clustered sample of prime time television programming from all available Dutch television channels. The clustered samples consist of all fictional programs broadcast on Dutch public and commercial networks during prime time at the beginning of autumn. The fictional programs included were all fictional with a storyline (Emons, 2011; Wester & Weijers, 2006), such as comedies, films, and soap operas. Excluded from the sample were all non-fictional programs such as animations, talk shows, sport programs, and news broadcasts. The samples from 1985 consist of drama programs broadcast on two Dutch networks (Nederland 1 and 2) in a period of four weeks. Due to the increase in the number of Dutch television channels, the number of weeks included in the 1990, and 1995 to 2010 samples were reduced to, respectively, two and one week of fictional television programs².

² 1985: Nederland 1 en 2; 1995: Nederland 1, 2 en 3, RTL4 en 5, Veronica en SBS6; 2005: Nederland 1, 2 en 3, RTL 4, 5 en 7, SBS6, Net5, Talpa en Veronica; 2010: Nederland 1, 2 en 3, RTL 4, 5, 7 en 8, SBS6, Net5 en Veronica.

5.3.2 Codebook and coding procedures

In order to assess the representation of morality in fiction programs, the programs were coded on two different levels (general information and moral casting). The first level of analysis encompassed general information about the *year of the broadcast* (i.e. 1985, 1995, 2005, 2010), and the *origin of the program* (i.e. the Netherlands, the United States, Great-Britain, France, Other, Not able to code).

The second level of coding was geared towards establishing who made up the cast of prime time fiction over time (i.e. morality on *cast level*), in order to establish *who* these stories were about ('*Message System Analysis*', cf. Gerbner, 1969, 1998a). The focus in the second level of coding was on the main characters of the program. The choice to focus on main characters solely is supported by the notion that they are the carriers of storylines and therefore will most likely embody important moral characteristics (Weijers, 2014; Wester & Weijers, 2006). A main character was defined as a character who plays a leading role, is the carrier of a storyline and is thereby indispensable to the narrative (Egri, 1960; Weijers, 2014). In each program the coders could code up to eight main characters. For each main character they coded several variables relating to demographic and moral categories.

Demographic categories which were largely based on the demographic characteristics coded in the dissertation of Emons (2011) as well as the study conducted by Koeman, Peeters, and D'Haenens (2007). *Gender*, the coding categories for gender of the main character were male; female; male animated/creature; female animated/creature or other. In the analysis, only the categories (human) *male* and *female* were used.

The coding categories for *age of the main character* reflected five life cycles, and the coders were instructed to establish the age of the character by determining which age group or life stage (i.e. child: 0-12 years, teenager: 13-18 years, young adult: 19-29 years, adult: 30-64 years or elderly: 65 and older) the character was supposed to represent. Coders were instructed that if the main character was represented in various life stages, the life stage that was dominant (i.e. took up most of the screen time) had to be coded, if this was unclear the option unable to code had to be used. Age was later recoded in the analysis, child and teenager were combined while the other categories were maintained.

For each main character the variable *transgression* was coded, to discern if the character committed any form of transgression (yes/no). The coders were then asked to indicate which of the three types of transgressions the character committed (*transgression type*, Table 1).

Transgression of the law was based on the most commonly reported violations of as presented in Dutch police statistics (CBS, 2013) as well as an overview of unlawful social act committed on prime time presented by Potter

Table 1 Overview of coding categories per type of transgression

Type of transgression	Coding categories
Transgression of the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Does not commit any transgression of the law' - 'Commits a violent transgression' - 'Commits a sexual offence' - 'Commits a financial offence' - 'Commits another type of transgression of law'
Professional transgression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Does not commit any professional transgression' - 'Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct' - 'Behavior is characterized as incompetent' - 'Commits insubordination' - 'Commits another type professional transgression'
Social transgression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Does not commit any social transgression' - 'Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats' - 'Breaks the bonds of the primary group' - 'Displays indecent, inappropriate or vulgar behavior' - 'Commits another type social transgression'

and Ware (1987), while professional transgression were based on the literature surrounding professional ethics (Abbott, 1983; Jamal & Bowie, 1995; Love, 2002) and social transgressions were based on previous content analyses on social transgressions on television (Grabe, 2002; Hastall, Bilandzic, & Sukalla, 2013; Selnow, 1986; 1990, Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982; Potter & Ware, 1987). The categories, based on previous research, were extensively tested and reduced to the selected categories in an iterative process. In the analysis the categories of the three main types of transgressions were collapsed, in that either a person did or did not commit respectively a transgression of the law, a professional transgression or a social transgression.

When a transgression was coded for a character, the *consequences of the transgression* were also coded in the following categories: 'No, consequences', 'Transgression is punished: a) Through a judicial process; b) punished socially; c) punished professionally; d) punished in another way', 'Transgression is rewarded', 'Transgression produces mixed/ambivalent consequences', 'Other'. *Consequences* were later recoded for analysis into 'No, consequences', 'Punishment', 'Reward', and 'Other'.

The *moral nature* of each main character was coded as good, bad, ambivalent, or unable to code. Moral nature had to be determined by behavior of the character (i.e. transgressions committed) and the verbal judgment of characters of that

behavior (cf. Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Luckmann, 2002; Hastall, Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2013). This meant that good characters were categorized as such if they were good in their goals, motivations, intentions and other observable behavior (i.e. committed no transgressions) and they received no criticism or other negative judgments about their behavior from others. Bad characters were categorized as such if their observable behavior could be typed as evil or bad (in goals, motivations or intentions), if they committed severe transgressions and were judged for them by others. Ambivalent characters were categorized as such if their observable behavior is categorized by both good and bad with regard to goals, intentions and motivations (for example doing the wrong things for the right reasons), as exemplified by the verbal praise of judgment from others. In sum, moral nature was discerned by comments and judgments that were made about the character by other characters as well as the transgressions they committed and the consequences that followed.

5.3.3 Coder training and reliability

Six coders (four female and two male third year Communication Science students) aided the researchers in developing and fine-tuning the coding instrument by reporting their experiences when applying it to different fiction programs. After several weeks of discussion, around twenty-five hours of intensive in-class coder training as well as independent practice on programs that were not part of the sample, and reliability checks, they coded (up to) a forty-five programs each.

The coders worked individually, and twenty percent ($n = 84$) of the programs in the present sample were double-coded. Coders consulted the primary researcher when there was disagreement, which was then resolved by the researcher. Based on this overlap the levels of inter-rater reliability were calculated using the macro by Hayes (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007) which is reported in Table 2. Taking Krippendorff's criteria for acceptable (.67) and good (.80) inter-rater reliability (2004, p.241), the Krippendorff's Alpha's were satisfactory overall, ranging from .79 to 1.00.

Table 2 Levels of inter-rater reliability

Level of coding	Variables	Krippendorff's alpha
General	Year of broadcast	1.00
	Country of origin	1.00
Cast-level	Gender	.99
	Age	.86
	Moral nature	.88
	Transgression	.79
	Transgression of law	.83
	Professional transgression	.84
	Social transgression	.80
	Consequences	.79

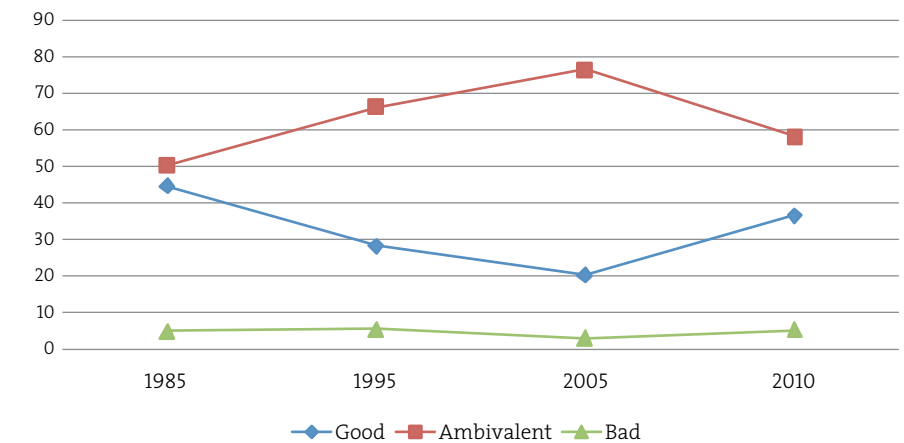
5.4 Results

The results for moral casting in television fiction over time will be presented in the order of the research questions they aim to answer. First the results for the distribution of moral nature and differences in moral nature over time will be presented, secondly gender and age coupled with moral nature, and differences over time, thirdly transgressions and punishment and its association with moral nature, and lastly moral casting and its association with country of origin.

Moral nature

The overall majority of characters in the sample of fictional programs ($n = 1020$, 63.4%) are categorized as ambivalent and another third as good ($n = 513$, 31.9%), while only a small percentage is categorized as bad or evil ($n = 75$, 4.7%). Over time, there are significant fluctuations in the distribution of the moral nature over characters (see Figure 1) ($\chi^2(6, N = 1608) = 59.604$, *Cramer's V* = .136, $p < 0.001$).

Furthermore, the amount of main characters has increased over time, from 260 in 1985 to 578 in 2010. This can partly be explained by an increase in the number of fictional programs (from 65 to 103), however relatively the number of main characters has increased from an average of 4 to an average of 5,6 per main storyline. Thereby resulting in a larger cast and therefore most likely more morally complex storytelling. As viewers we have to follow and understand the narrative cycles of an increasing amount of main characters (problems, choices and decisions; Weijers, 2014), which have grown to become intricately entwined (cf. Johnson, 2005; Mittell, 2006).

Figure 1 Distribution of moral nature of main character over time

The presence of good characters decreases over time, from 44.6% in 1985, to 28.3% in 1995, to a low of 20.4% in 2005, to 36.5% in 2010. This decrease of good characters, doesn't change the presence of bad characters, they remain a relatively stable 5 percent over time (aside from a dip to 3.0% in 2005). The decrease of good characters, therefore, coincides with the increase of ambivalent characters over time. Furthermore, since 1985 ambivalent characters make up more than half of the cast of prime time fiction, and show the biggest change over time (relatively and absolutely), moving from 50.4% ($n = 131$) in 1985 to 66.2% ($n = 241$) in 1995, and a high of 76.6% ($n = 311$) in 2005 and then dipping towards 58.3% ($n = 337$) in 2010. Over the last decades, we can affirmatively state that the presence and prevalence of ambivalent characters in the cast of prime time fiction has grown more pronounced.

Moral casting and socio-demographic characteristics

The cast of prime time fiction revealed an overrepresentation of men and adults, similar to decades of previous studies reporting on the cast of prime time television. In the presentation of the results, we compare proportions and therefore offer relative and not absolute comparisons.

As can be seen in Table 3, the results with regard to the distribution of the various moral natures over male and female characters, reveal that overall there are significant gendered differences in the moral make-up of fiction ($\chi^2(2, N = 1608) = 27.617$, *Cramer's V* = .131, $p < 0.001$), such that overall there is an association of women with goodness (adjusted residual = 3.3, $p < .001$) and conversely there is an association of men with badness (adjusted residual = 4.5, $p < .001$).

With regard to the overall age distribution of characters with different moral natures (Table 3), the results reveal that the different natures show comparable proportions in each age category. For each age category, roughly around on third is good and roughly around two thirds is ambivalent. Very small portions of each age group are morally bad, except the adult age category which is significantly overrepresented in the morally bad category (adjusted residual = 3.9, $p < 0.01$). An important side-note here is that both age-categories at the far end of the age-spectrum (< 18 and $65 >$) together comprise less than 10 percent of the cast of television fiction, and particularly the 65 and older age bracket is almost absent in main characters over time.

Table 3 Overall distribution of gender and age over different moral natures

	Gender ^a		Age ^b			
	M	F	< 18	19-35	36-65	65 >
Good	28.6	36.4*	35.8	33.5	30.4	40.0
Ambivalent	64.7	61.7	63.4	64.2	63.4	58.0
Bad	6.7*	1.9	0.8	2.3	6.3*	2.0
<i>n</i>	924	684	123	427	1008	50

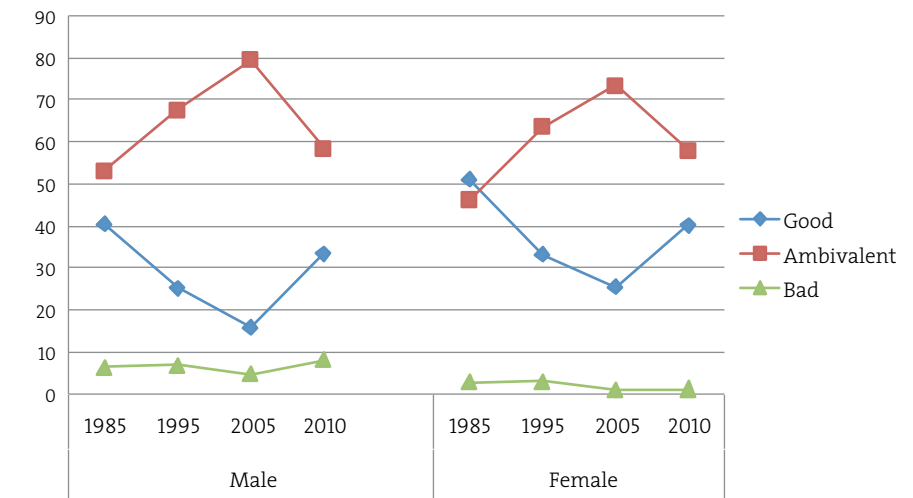
Note. ^a $\chi^2(2, N = 1608) = 27.615$, Cramer's $V = .131$, $p < 0.001$; ^b $\chi^2(6, N = 1608) = 18.010$, Cramer's $V = .075$, $p < 0.01$
* frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

Over time, as can be seen in Figure 2, there are significant differences in the distribution of moral natures over male and female characters ($\chi^2(6, N = 1608) = 59.604$, Cramer's $V = .136$, $p < 0.001$).

The proportion of ambivalence grows for both men and women up until 2005 and then drops in 2010. Thereby seeming to indicate a relative gender-neutrality when it comes to ambivalence. Over time, the association of women with goodness and men with badness remains.

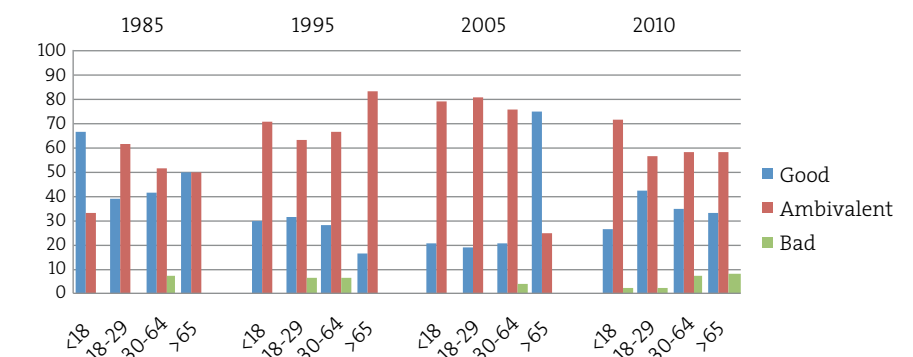
As can be seen in Figure 3, the results with regard to the association of characters of different ages with different moral natures also reveal significant changes over time ($\chi^2(6, N = 1608) = 59.604$, Cramer's $V = .193$, $p < .001$). The adjusted standardized residuals reveal that in 1985 there was a significant overrepresentation young (< 18) (adjusted residual = 4.1, $p < 0.01$) and adult age category (36-64) (adjusted residual = 3.5, $p < 0.01$) as morally good, while in 1995 there was a significant overrepresentation of young adults (19-35) (adjusted residual = 2.4, $p < 0.01$) and the elderly (adjusted residual = 2.0, $p < 0.01$) as morally bad. In 2005 both the young adults (adjusted residual = 4.2, $p < 0.01$) as well as the adults

Figure 2 Gendered distribution of moral nature of main character over time



(adjusted residual = 4.8, $p < 0.01$) are overrepresented in the morally ambivalent category, and lastly in 2010 young adults are significantly overrepresented in the morally good category (adjusted residual = 3.6, $p < 0.01$).

Figure 3 Age distribution in moral nature of main character over time

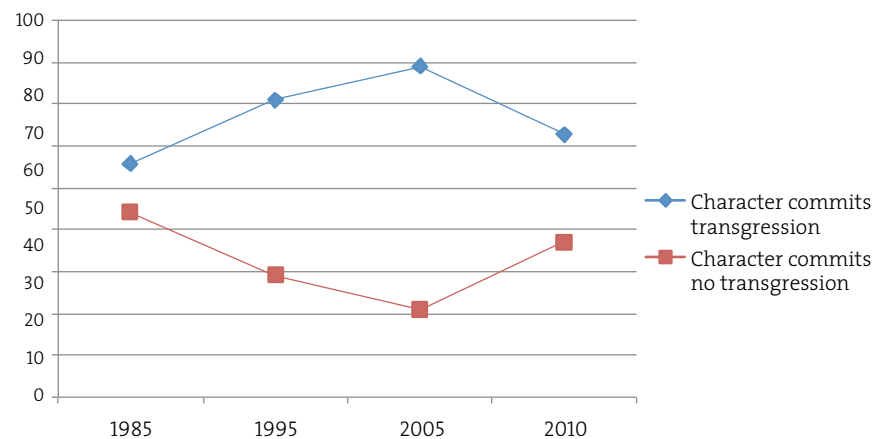


The same fluctuation that was apparent for men and women is that for the two largest age groups, young adults (19-35) and adults (36-64) the proportion of morally ambivalent characters increase up until 2005, and then decrease in 2010.

Moral nature and (type of) transgression

Overall, two thirds of all main characters (67.6%, $n = 1,087$) commits one or more transgressions (see Figure 4). Over time, the amount of transgressors (i.e. characters that commit one or more transgressions) significantly increases from 55.8% in 1985, to 70.9% in 1995, to a high of 79.1% in 2005, down to 62.8% in 2010 ($\chi^2 (3, N = 1608) = 48.837$, $Cramer's V = .174$, $p < 0.001$).

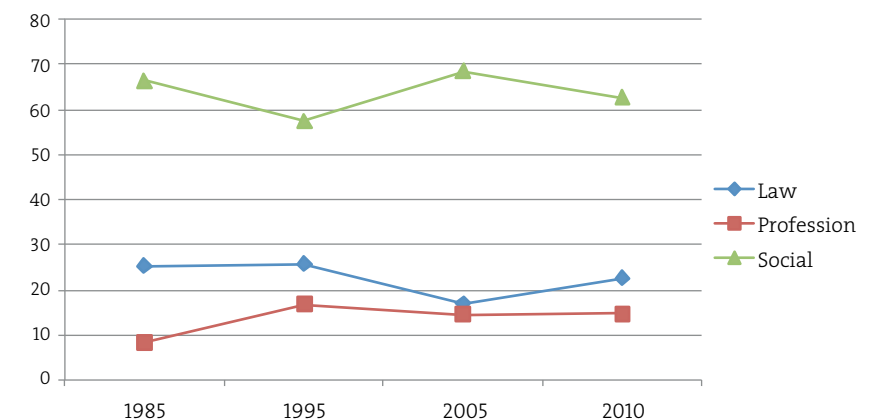
Figure 4 Transgressors per year



When analyzing the transgressions committed by characters of various moral natures, the results reveal that overall of all the good characters only 4 (0.8%) commit a transgression, of all the ambivalent characters 1009 (98.9%) commit a transgression, and of all the bad characters 74 (98.7%) commit a transgression. The different moral natures therefore differ significantly in the act of committing transgressions and the results reveal a very strong association between transgression and moral nature ($\chi^2 (2, N = 1608) = 1535.694$, $Cramer's V = .977$, $p < 0.001$). Over time, there are no significant changes in the committing of transgressions by characters with various moral natures ($\chi^2 (6, N = 1087) = 9.954$, $p = ns$). When considering the committed transgressions as a whole ($n = 1087$), this means that *more than 90% of all transgressions* are committed by ambivalent characters.

It seems that characters often commit more than one type of transgression over the course of a program. The total amount of transgressions is 1,434, which means that an average transgressor commits 1.3 transgressions. The total amount of transgressions ($n = 1,434$) is built up by 315 transgressions of the law, 207 professional transgression and 912 social transgressions. This means that social transgression dominate as the most prevalent type of transgression, followed by transgressions of the law and the least prevalent are professional transgressions. Overall and over time, social transgressions are the most common transgressions, followed by transgressions of the law and professional transgressions. Over time (see Figure 5), there are significant changes in the presence of social transgressions ($\chi^2 (3, N = 1087) = 30.508$, $Cramer's V = .168$, $p < 0.001$), professional transgression ($\chi^2 (3, N = 1087) = 10.918$, $Cramer's V = .100$, $p < 0.05$) and transgressions of the law ($\chi^2 (3, N = 1087) = 10.516$, $Cramer's V = .098$, $p < 0.05$).

Figure 5 Type of transgression per year



The results regarding the association of characters of different moral natures and the types of transgressions they committed reveal that good characters only incidentally commit transgression ($n = 4$, 1 professional, and 3 social). The differences are the most pronounced when considering ambivalent and bad characters and particularly social and lawful transgressions (see Table 4).

Of all the transgressions that are committed by bad characters, 95% is a transgression of the law, while for ambivalent characters only a quarter of all their transgressions is a transgression of the law. Conversely, of all the transgressions

committed by ambivalent characters 86% is a social transgression, while around half of the bad characters also commit a social transgression. This pattern also returns when this association is explored over time (see Figure 6). Bad characters are marked as such continuously by their association with the transgression of the law, while social transgressions mark morally ambivalent characters.

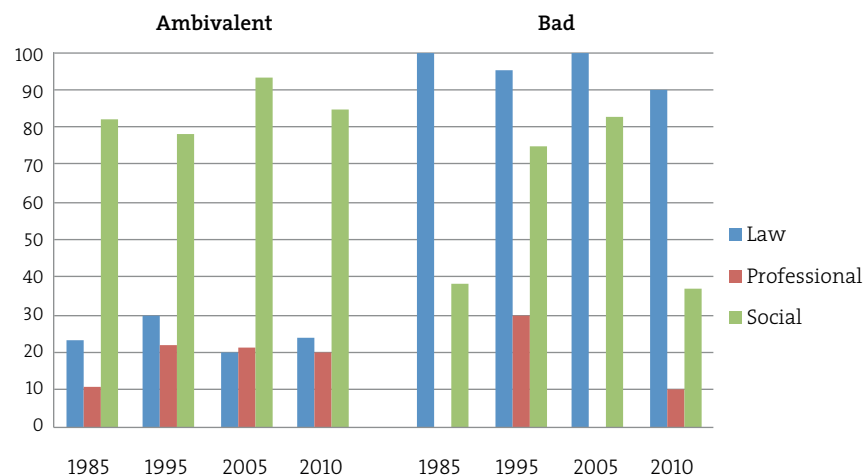
Table 4 Types of transgression committed by characters of different moral natures

	Good	Ambivalent	Bad
Law^a	0.0	24.2	95.5*
Profession^b	25.0	19.5	12.2
Social^c	75.0	86.0*	55.4
N	4	1009	74

Note. ^a $\chi^2(2, N = 1087) = 174.156$, *Cramer's V* = .400, $p < 0.00$; ^b $\chi^2(2, N = 1087) = 2.516$, *Cramer's V* = .048, $p = ns$; ^c $\chi^2(2, N = 1087) = 48.092$, *Cramer's V* = .210, $p < 0.001$

* frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

Figure 6 Types of transgressions committed over time by ambivalent and bad characters



Over time the results reveal no significant changes in the distribution of characters with different moral natures in committing transgressions of the law ($\chi^2(6, N = 315) = 3.741$, *Cramer's V* = .109, $p = ns$), professional transgressions ($\chi^2(6, N = 207) = 11.000$, *Cramer's V* = .163, $p = ns$) of social transgressions ($\chi^2(6, N = 912) = 7.579$, *Cramer's V* = .064, $p = ns$).

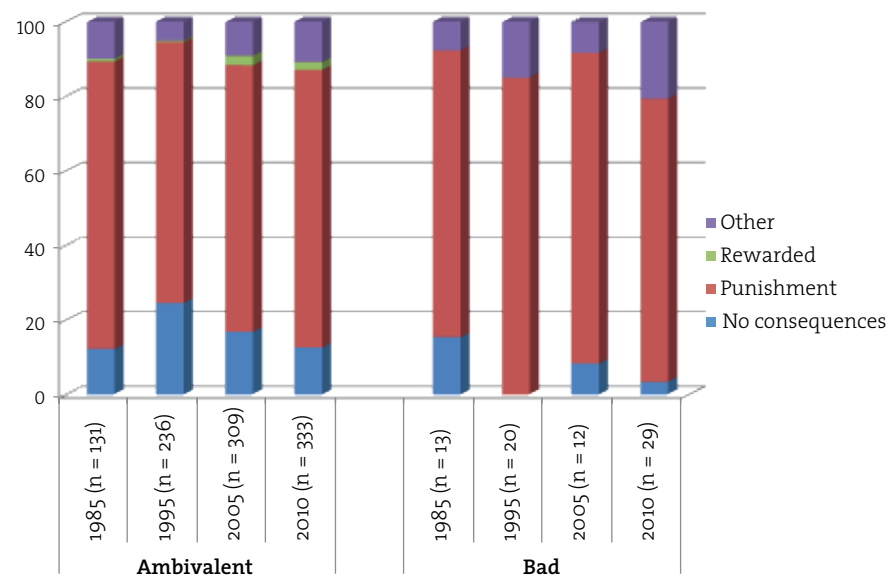
Moral nature and the consequences of transgressions

As can be seen in Table 5, there are significant differences between characters of various moral natures and the consequences they suffer when committing a transgression ($\chi^2(6, N = 1087) = 13.508$, *Cramer's V* = .079, $p < 0.05$). In general, characters are almost always punished for their transgressions, regardless of their moral nature. When considering all the committed transgression, 73% is punished (the punishment varying from lawful to social).

Table 5 The consequences of transgressions per moral nature

	Total	Good	Ambivalent	Bad
No consequence	16.0	50.0	16.0	5.0
Punished	73.0	50.0	73.0	80.0
Rewarded	2.0	0	2.0	0
Other	9.0	0	9.0	15.0
N	1087	4	1009	74

Bad characters are punished slightly more often for committed transgressions (80%), followed by ambivalent characters (73%). Good characters are punished for their transgressions, as much as they face no consequences. However, good characters only commit a total of 4 transgressions overall. Overall, 16% of the transgressions remain without consequences, 2% is rewarded and 9% faces other but mostly negative consequences which are not a direct result of punishment by a moral community (for example death, disease and disrupted social relationships). Over time, there are significant differences in the distribution of different types of consequences for characters of various moral natures ($\chi^2(9, N = 1087) = 22.019$, *Cramer's V* = .082, $p < 0.01$) (Figure 7). The results show that the category of transgressions without consequences doubles for ambivalent characters between 1985 and 1995 (12.2% versus 24.6%), and then declines to 12.6% in 2010. Bad characters are punished for roughly three quarters of the committed transgressions, however over time the category of other consequences also increases over time

Figure 7 Distribution of consequences of transgressions per moral nature over time

(7.7% in 1985 versus 20.7% in 2010). The message that is conveyed by these results, overall and over time, is that transgressions are almost always followed by punishment and thereby contributes to the maintenance and reproduction of the moral order.

Moral casting and country of origin

Possibly the changes over time, described in the previous paragraphs, are a result of the changes in programming when considering country of origin. As can be seen in Table 6, fiction programs from the Netherlands and the United States show comparable proportions of ambivalent and good characters. The proportion of bad characters is somewhat bigger in programs from the U.S. (5.7%, adjusted residual = 2.5, $p < 0.01$) than from the Netherlands (1.6%). The differentiation of characters with various moral natures from countries other than the Netherlands and the U.S., is built up out of less good characters and more bad characters (adjusted residual = 2.0, $p < 0.01$).

Over time, fiction programs for the Netherlands and the United States show a similar development in their distribution of characters with different moral natures (see Figure 8).

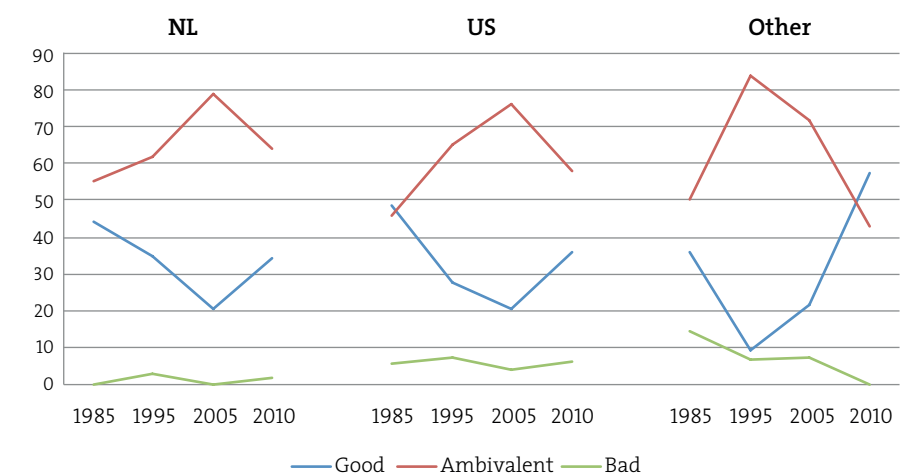
Table 6 Distribution of moral natures per country of origin

	NL	US	Other
Good	32.7	32.1	27.6
Ambivalent	65.7	62.2	64.2
Bad	1.6	5.7*	8.2*
N	499	975	134

$\chi^2 (4, N = 1608) = 17.625$, *Cramer's V* = .074, $p < 0.01$

* frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

Both reveal an increase in morally ambivalent characters up until 2005 and then a sharp drop in 2010, and correspondingly a decrease of morally good characters up until 2005, while American fiction programs consistently contain more morally bad characters. Overall, the fictional programs with another country of origin, follows a similar pattern, but over time the changing presence of good, ambivalent and bad characters is much more erratic thereby indicating that these programs differ from Dutch and American programs in moral make-up ($\chi^2 (6, N = 1608) = 59.604$, *Cramer's V* = .136; $p < 0.001$). Based on these results the increase in morally ambivalent characters in the Dutch television landscape is not a solely a result of American fictional programs.

Figure 8 Distribution of moral nature main character over time per country of origin

5.5 Discussion

The current study started from the premise that even though TV critics and researchers have devoted time and effort to describe and analyze the effects of morally ambiguous characters (e.g. Barbier, 2014; Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2011; Fulford, 2014; Krakowiak, 2008; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2009; Raney, 2004), there was no tangible evidence that these characters were indeed so prevalent in our TV landscape. We therefore aimed to discern what the distribution of different moral natures (i.e. good, bad or ambivalent) of main characters was in TV fiction aired on Dutch prime time television over the past twenty-five years. Our results revealed that in fact morally ambivalent characters have significantly increased their presence in the cast of television fiction. However, surprisingly, the results also revealed that ambivalent characters have always been the most dominant characters in prime time fiction. More than half of the characters were already ambivalent in 1985.

Furthermore, the cast of fiction only contains a very small and stable amount of bad characters (around 5 percent) and the increase of ambivalent characters, which coincides with a decrease of good characters, reaches its peak in 2005 only then to decline in 2010 (and conversely good characters to increase). The sudden drop in ambivalent characters after 2005, is not easily explained and points to the importance of the continued monitoring of the presence of morally ambivalent characters. A continued assessment of the moral nature of these characters over time, would reveal if this drop was a onetime incident or if the trend is set towards the presence of morally ambivalent characters and good characters to truly converge once more.

When the association of socio-demographic characteristics with moral nature were explored, the results revealed that the cast of prime time fiction shows an overrepresentation of men and adults similar to decades of previous studies (e.g. Koeman, Peeters, & D'Haenens, 2007; Emons, 2011; Segijn et al., 2014; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). The exploration of the association with moral nature and gender revealed a predominant (proportional) association of women with goodness and men with bad moral natures, and gender neutrality with regard to the ambivalent moral nature (i.e. comparable proportions of men and women over time). This gender neutrality regarding ambivalent characters is in contrast with the expectancy of researchers such as Jonason et al. (2012) who stated female antiheroes or female ambivalent characters are not common in the media, because society views the anti-hero role as a male prerogative. Children, teenagers and the elderly are severely underrepresented in the cast of prime time fiction over time. However, for all the age categories except adults approximately similar proportions of good and ambivalent characters were found, indicating that age

functions as an equalizer when it comes to the differentiation of moral natures over characters. The only exception, which was to be expected, to this overall categorization was that adults were overrepresented as morally bad characters.

The results regarding the increase in morally ambivalent characters over time, is seemingly mirrored in the increase in transgressions of characters over time. When comparing Figure 1 and 4, this becomes clear. Next to the increase in transgressions over time (which is also capped off in 2005), another indicator for increased moral complexity which was outlined before is the (proportional) growth of ambivalent consequences of transgressions. However, of the utmost importance when assessing the potential impact of the moral messages conveyed by the behavior of characters of various moral natures, is the presence of punishment for transgression (Bandura, 1977; Grabe, 2002; Hastall, Bilandzic, & Sukalla, 2013; Potter & Ware, 1987). The results revealed that the majority of transgressions are followed by punishment, regardless of the moral nature of the transgressor. Furthermore, the majority of all transgression are social in nature, followed by much smaller proportions of transgressions of the law and profession. Bad characters are characterized by transgressions of the law, while ambivalent characters are characterized by social transgressions. Overall, ambivalent characters commit the most transgressions (mostly social), and this does not change over time. All characters, including ambivalent characters are almost always punished when they commit a transgression. This makes the moral lesson conveyed abundantly clear: transgressions of any kind are punished and not tolerated. These results are partly in line with and partly in contrast with the results by Hastall, Bilandzic and Sukalla (2013). They also reported an abundance of social transgressions rather than transgressions of law or profession, but also revealed that in only one third of the instances transgressions were punished. Since we found that nearly three quarters of all transgressions are punished, television fiction clearly reproduces the guidelines of acceptable and unacceptable behavior in society. Our results thereby suggest that the moral order is reproduced and maintained in television fiction, in a similar fashion as described in previous research (Costera Meijer & Krijnen, 2007; Grabe, 2002; Tamborini et al., 2010).

Lastly, the results of country of origin reveal that the moral make-up of the cast of American prime time drama is very similar to that produced in the Netherlands regarding good and ambivalent characters. American fiction showcases slightly more bad characters overall than Dutch drama, but less than other foreign fiction. Over time, both American and Dutch drama had an increase in ambivalent characters, both capped off in 2005. This development was much more erratic with other foreign fiction. All in all, the idea that the growing presence of ambivalent characters would be a uniquely American phenomenon is debunked by our results.

All in all, the prevalence of these ambivalent and thus compelling and complex characters, as well as the changes in transgressions and punishments, can be seen as an intricate part of a process in which fictional television narratives have grown increasingly complex over the last decade or so (Mittell, 2006; Johnson, 2005a). The reported results for the increasing moral complexity in television fiction over time (chapter 4 in this dissertation), seem to align with the increase in morally ambivalent characters as well as the more ambivalent consequences of transgressions. These results are in line with Johnson (2005a, 2005b) and Dant (2005, 2012) who argued that the plots of television drama and television comedy (sitcoms) have grown complex, through an increased number of overlapping and intertwining plots, a growing numbers of relationships and affiliations between characters and an increase in the amount of background information you need to interpret.

To keep their audience entertained, television shows have internally developed narrative forms that avoid creating moral outcomes that are too simple, that might too easily appear to be read from a modernist code of ethics ...the viewer's interest in the particular show ... is driven by their concern with the moral consequences of characters' actions (Dant, 2005, p.6)

It seems likely that the prevalence of morally ambivalent characters involved in storylines that have grown more morally complex is linked to viewers investment in these characters, leading to commercial and critically acclaimed success. Research by Raney, Schmid, Nieman and Ellensohn (2009) pointed out that viewers derived greater enjoyment from morally complex and ambivalent heroes than from traditional virtuous heroes. This then begs the question why these characters appeal to us in such a way. It might be that these characters feel more real, feel more like us as viewers and thereby function as a point of moral orientation for the viewer (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2011). Possibly morally ambiguous characters are enjoyed and liked by viewers because the call for reflection on moral themes, personally held values or because they facilitate a temporary expansion of self (Eden, Daalmans, & Johnson, 2015; Jarvis & Burr, 2011; Lewis, Tamborini, & Weber, 2014; Shedlosky-Shoemaker, Costabile, & Arkin, 2014; Slater, Johnson, Cohen, Comello, & Ewoldsen, 2014). Or maybe these characters are so appealing because

...they help us to vicariously exercise our constantly suppressed selfishness and to cope with the frustration of a lack of a just world ... morally complex characters may function as a vicarious expression of our sometimes, wannabe, in-an-alternate-world, unrestricted moral desires" (Raney & Janicke, 2013, p.163).

In any case more research is needed to further analyze the complexities of the appeal of these prevalent characters.

5.6 Limitations and directions for future research

As with all studies this project was not without limitations, which open up interesting avenues for future research. The choice to limit the coding to only eight main characters has potentially left a plethora (main and secondary) characters un-coded. Therefore, the results do not present the complete picture of moral casting in television fiction over time. Furthermore, aside from increasing the coded content to all characters future research, future research might also endeavor to explore in what ways aspects of moral content (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014) and moral casting are associated. Research could explore if characters with various moral natures are present in specific themes and domains? Or what types of moral reasoning (morality types) are associated with characters of various moral natures?

A second point of attention is the results for moral casting which all showed a dip in the trend in 2010 which is difficult to interpret, and which makes it difficult to argue that morally ambivalent characters have indeed increased in a straightforward manner. A possible solution would be to replicate this study with data in 2015, in order to assess if this dip was temporary or indicative of the onset of a decline of morally ambivalent characters. Furthermore, the number and (commercial) nature of different channels in the subsamples for each year might have affected the results. For example, commercial channels might have presented more morally ambivalent characters as exciting plot devices in order to attract viewers than publicly funded stations. Differentiation by channel funding would therefore be an interesting avenue for future research. Lastly, the study was conducted in the Netherlands, which despite its diversity is a relatively small and managed market, which may affect the translation of the results to a free market situation.

Future studies might also explore the representation of morality in moral casting in other genres than television fiction, it seems that for example real life exemplars of moral ambivalence are especially prevalent in newer reality shows (*Jersey Shore*, *Big Brother*) or news. As stated earlier the actions of these people with a morally questionable nature leads to great controversy in the public debate, much like the guests of *Jerry Springer* once did, and it would be interesting to analyze what function these people fulfill in those shows and if the moral outrage that surrounds these programs might be systematically explored. Furthermore, ethnicity as a socio-demographic characteristic might be an

interesting addition in further studies of the moral nature of characters, since research by Gerbner (1995, 1998a) revealed that ethnic minorities are predominantly assigned the role of villain or perpetrator, i.e. being of a bad moral nature. It would be interesting to analyze how ethnicity would interact with the distribution of moral natures of characters.

Despite its limitation, the presented study provides a first empirical base for further research into the presence and prevalence of morally complex characters in fiction and other media entertainment. More research is needed on the representation of morality on both the level of moral content as well as on moral casting. More research is needed to disentangle the complex results regarding moral content, by for example comparing fiction with other genres. More research into the presence as well as effects of morally ambivalent characters is also needed to substantiate or quell the concerns regarding these characters and their possible effects on viewers.

6

CHAPTER

The many faces of television's public moral discourse? Exploring genre differences in the representation of the moral content in prime time television¹

This study is focused on differences between TV genres (news, entertainment & fiction) in the representation of morality on television. We conducted a quantitative content analysis, based on a sample of prime-time television programs (2012) (N = 485). The results reveal distinct differences between the genres concerning the representation of moral domains, moral themes, types of morality and moral complexity, and striking similarities regarding moral communities as beacons of moral accountability.

¹ This chapter is submitted for publication as: Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2016). The many faces of television's public moral discourse? Exploring genre differences in the representation of the moral content in prime time television.

6.1 Introduction

In discussions on television and its role in society, this relationship is often seen in very negative terms. “Critics blame the medium for a significant measure of many of the nation’s ills, ranging from violence to illiteracy, from adults’ materialism to children’s lust for sugared breakfast cereals. In many ways, television has become our national scapegoat, the medium we love to hate and hate to love” (Warner, 1987, p.140). The prevalence of television as a subject of our collective mistrust and disfavor is most likely a reflection of the all encompassing pervasive presence of the medium in our homes and our perception of its possible negative influences (Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2013; Smith, Smith, Pieper, Yoo, Ferris, Downs, & Bowden, 2006).

As a consequence of its negative image, television has been blamed for society’s ills, for example a growing lack of social cohesion or society’s hardening social climate (Biltereyst, 2004; Krijnen, 2007; Lind & Rarick, 1992; Tavener, 2000). The negative image is based on the assumption that the media can change both our moral compass and our moral behavior. The basal idea is that through the indirect experiences encountered through media exposure viewers might get a distorted image of what is normal, good and bad in everyday society and that the (anti-social) behaviors and their consequences represented in the media might serve as a behavioral model especially for younger viewers (Bandura, 1977; Gerbner, 1998). This enduring concern in mass communication studies can be traced through from studies as early as the Fenton’s study (1911) into the influence of reading newspapers on anti-social behaviors, the 1930s Payne Fund Study focused on the erosion of children’s moral standards by feature films, as well as more recent studies about the corrupting influence of genres such as reality television (Abt & Seesholtz, 1994; Biltereyst, 2004; Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2013; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995; Lundy, Ruth, & Park, 2008). However, there have been only a few studies focused on television’s actual moral content.

So far, the study of morality in television content has mostly been dealt with by scholars in an indirect manner, with studies focused on various topics of moral concern (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2013). This is most evident in the extensive research conducted on sexual and violent media content, but extends to other areas as well. For example, the moral content of prime time television has been studied with a focus on for instance problem-resolutions, types of morality, the presence of values as well as norm-violations (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Grabe, 2002; Hastall, Bilandzic, & Sukulla, 2013; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Selnow, 1986, Selnow, 1990; Sutherland & Siniaowsky, 1982). The results of these studies are not in line with television’s supposed negative moral value, stating that: television represents a large range of positive personal values as

well as different types of morality (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014), television “associates goodness and positive values with the state, power, and recognized authority” (Selnow, 1990, p.72), television messages reinforce the idea of the family as the cornerstone of society, and it seems “to promote ‘functional behaviour’ instead of ‘dysfunctional behaviour’” (Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005, p.370). On the other hand, the results of Hastall, Bilandzic and Sukalla’s (2013) study of fiction genres revealed an overabundance of norm violations and a surprisingly low amount of punishment. These results, especially in the light of social learning or moral cultivation perspective, lead these authors to voice their concerns for television’s impact on viewer’s moral judgments.

The previously conducted studies focused on morality in television content were mostly based on prime time fiction programming or a limited number of television genres, which leads to questions about the generality of the results regarding the television landscape. In other words what does the whole spectrum of television content (ranging from news and information programming, to reality and entertainment programming as well as fiction programming) have to offer viewers with regard to the overall representation of morality. Furthermore, recently studies (especially from a cultivation perspective) have begun to outline differences between genres in the representation of the world as well as cultivation of different worldviews as a result of different genre preferences (Cohen & Weimann, 2000; Grabe & Drew, 2007; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). These newer studies have started to examine the idea put forth by Hawkins and Pingree (1981) that different TV genres may cultivate different views of the world. Previous content analytic studies support this notion, since they revealed large differences between genres (Barrile, 1986; Gomes & Williams, 1990; Koeman et al., 2007; Pennekamp, 2011; Potter & Ware, 1987). This might mean that different genres might also provide viewers with different moral landscapes, concerned with different moral themes, moral domains and types of morality. Therefore, the objective of the current study is to explore and empirically describe the differences between television genres broadcast on prime time television in the representation of morality in its many manifestations.

6.2 Theoretical frame and research questions

This study follows the tradition of the cultural or ritual approach to communication (Carey, 1975). In this view media are a source of commonly shared meanings and the creator of a shared symbolic environment. This shared culture is created and maintained (in part) through storytelling. Storytelling is unique to the human (communicative) experience (Gottschall, 2012), since “Humans are the only

species that lives in a world erected by the stories they tell” (Gerbner, 1998, p.175). Before the mass media were instated, parents or community elders would tell stories to younger generations, like myths, to explain how the world works (Rosengren, 1984). Today, television acts as our main storyteller, hereby helping to integrate individuals into the established social order by offering certain models about appropriate values, behaviors, norms and ideas (Gerbner, 1998). And it is through the repeated and everyday exposure to televised stories about everyday human (moral and immoral) behavior and its consequences, that the rules of morality are internalized by viewers (Bandura, 1977, 2002).

We then assume that because people share similar stories about the world through their media exposure, they come to gain shared meanings as well as a similar vision of reality, which enables them to live together (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002; McQuail, 2000). This leads us to the theoretical assumption that a systematic study of TV-content enables us to draw conclusions about the nature of a society’s cultural environment. Media-content is thus conceptualized as a reflection (*mirror*) of the state a culture is in (Klapper, 1960; McQuail, 2000), and therefore a reflection of society’s moral make-up.

Gerbner (1970, 1995, 2002) has repeatedly pointed out, that in contemporary society television is the most prevalent storyteller, its content illuminates the hidden dynamics of the real world, how things work, how we should judge things in life and what value they have (good, bad). In other words, television tells us “about life, people, places, striving, power, fate and family life. It presents the good and the bad, the happy and sad, the powerful and the weak, and lets us know who or what is a success or a failure” (Signorielli & Morgan, 2001, p.335). As a result, television’s stories cultivate most of our perceptions about the world, about what we do, who we are, and what is and is not important. Televised stories represent *what* and *who* counts as good, important and valuable (i.e. what/who is morally good) in our culture, through selecting and highlighting some aspects of our culture and some persons in our culture more frequently and diversely than others (Gerbner, 1998).

Morality represented in television content

Even though the idea that television supplies “us with a relatively coherent system of images and messages” which together form a certain worldview which reflects and legitimizes the beliefs and values of the existing social order (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shannahan, 2002, p.44), has persisted over the years questions about the potential pluriformity of television’s content also quickly arose (Newcomb, 1978; Newcomb & Hirsch, 1984). This lead us to believe that, even if the message system as a whole cultivates a coherent worldview, on a genre level differences in emphasis might exist in the representation of morality.

In other words, in specific genres stories might focus on specific life domains and their respective moral themes, the representation of special moral communities and/or the presence of specific types of morality (Daalmans, Hijmans & Wester, 2014; Hastall, Bilandzic, & Sukalla, 2013; Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983, 1984). Our study's objective is the exploration of the differences in the moral content presented by television genres. Therefore genre differences will be the central focus of this study.

In this study morality will be analyzed on the level of the content in prime time's various television genres, and it is conceptualized as a general image of what is seen as good, worthy and important and conversely a condemnation of what is deemed bad, unworthy and unimportant in our society (Dupuis, 1980; Gerbner, 1995; Gert, 2011; Luckmann, 2002; Hijmans, 2010). It will be approached in different and increasingly abstract appearances in the television content – first domains and moral themes, followed by moral communities, types of morality and moral complexity (cf. Daalmans, Hijmans & Wester, 2014; Gerbner, 1970; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005) - which together comprise a full overview of what constitutes television's public discourse of morality.

The first aspect of morality which will be analyzed within the different genres broadcast on prime time television, are moral domains and themes. As previously pointed out, television tells stories that illustrate the dynamics of the world, how things work, how we should judge things and what value they have (Gerbner et al., 2002). By focusing on some life domains and themes more than others, television communicates a general picture of what is important and valuable in our society (i.e. Gerbner, 1970, p.73: by means of 'attention, emphasis and tendency'). This ordering of domains and themes thus illustrates the moral value certain topics have in society as well as the importance certain life domains in society, and how the distribution of these moral themes and moral domains might differ across different television genres. Studies, mostly on fictional programming, have already revealed a predominance of moral domains of family, justice and health care and respective moral themes (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Gerbner, 1995; Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Selnow, 1986/1990; Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982). These results give rise to the question if these moral domains and themes dominate in the whole of prime time programming, and if there are moral themes and domains that only occur in specific genres within prime time television.

RQ1: Are there differences between genres in the distribution of the represented moral domains in prime time television?

RQ2: Are there differences between genres in the distribution of the represented moral themes in prime time television?

Morality is intricately connected with specific "institutions" or moral communities (Tamborini, Eden, Bowman, Grizzard, & Lachlan, 2012; Tipton, 2002), since communities are the "carriers" of moral culture as well as the evaluative context of all (public) behavior. In other words, morality becomes visible in the actions of individuals and evaluations of those actions by others as members of communities that hold individuals accountable for that behavior (Hijmans, 2010; Luckmann, 2002). This makes it important to analyze which communities are presented as moral authority in a television story. Daalmans, Hijmans and Wester (2014) and Tamborini et al. (2012) concluded that television showcases many varying communities (or moral subcultures) large and abstract (nation-state) and small and intimate (family) as the moral context of accountability for the people's actions. Furthermore, a study (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2013) on the representation of morality in television fiction revealed that the most dominant moral community present in television fiction was the *parental or unchosen community* (cf. Tipton, 2002). This community is characterized by its connection and authority based on concepts of blood and identity, thereby extending from the traditional family unit, and other parental institutions such as the army, towards the more abstract national community. This community is tied to notions of identity and belonging in the concrete and abstract sense. These findings lead to questions about the generality or genre-specificity of these results, prompting the following research question:

RQ3: Are there differences between genres in the presence of moral communities in prime time television?

A third focal point of this study is the presence and nature of morality in television programming, as shown in the presence of different types of morality. The idea of moral pluralism in television genres is explored, following the conceptualization of multiple moralities present in the work of Daalmans, Hijmans and Wester (2014), Eden, Grizzard and Lewis (2011), Tamborini et al. (2012), Greene (2013), Haidt (2001), Hauser (2006), and Verplaetse (2008). Based on Daalmans, Hijmans, and Wester (2014), which outlined different types of morality but also concluded with a need for more definitive categories of morality we chose to adapt Tipton's ideal-typical model of distinct styles of ethical evaluation as a source for distinct types of morality connected to societal institutions.

Tipton (1982, 2002, p. 38-39) discerns four ideal types of distinct styles of ethical evaluation and notes that in the reality of actual institutions these types will intermix ("mixed moral meanings") depending on the social situation or institution at hand. We slightly adapted the typology of ethical styles for the analysis of the representation of morality in television. The first ethical style he

discerns can be typed as a style dependent on authority, which is why it is termed the *authoritative morality*. The authoritative morality is associated with tightly knit parental institutions, prototypically the family but also *in loco parentis* institutions such as the military and the church as well as the nation at large (2002, p.21). The second ethical style Tipton discerns is based on rules and regulations of societal institutions, and we therefore termed this style the *regulative morality*. The regulative morality, presupposes a set of social roles that are defined by obligatory roles of interaction and professional ideals of character, such as being a good doctor. The third ethical style that Tipton describes, i.e. “the consequential style”, is funded on utilitarian principles of economic institutions based on the market, and is in this study termed the *market morality*. Market morality, is tied to the organizational structure that “links free, equal, and self-interested individuals through exchange and contract, whether as buyers and sellers or investors and entrepreneurs” (2002, p.26). The fourth and last ideal type of ethical reasoning that Tipton discerns is rooted in the leisure institutions of private life (i.e. couples, friends), in which members are connected through shared tastes and experiences, which we therefore termed the *expressive morality*. Based on Daalmans, Hijmans, and Wester (2013) we can conclude, that overall and over time the expressive type of morality is the most prevalent type of morality in television fiction. These results then prompt the question if all genres showcase a dominance of the expressive type of morality, or if other genres might represent different types of morality since it focuses on different aspects of social life. The fourth research question therefore is:

RQ4: Are there differences between genres in the presence and distribution of the represented types of morality in prime time television?

For some time now scholars and critics have argued that the plots of television fiction have been growing increasingly complex (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014; Dant, 2005; Johnson, 2005a, 2005b; Mittel, 2006), through an increased number of overlapping and intertwining plots, a growing number of relationships and affiliations between characters, an increase in the amount of background information, and a great dose of moral ambiguity in its characters. These developments in fiction might be a reaction to society growing increasingly complex as a result of modernization and fiction mirroring these complexities (i.e. ‘cultural negotiation’, Newcomb, 1988).

However, scholars have also pointed out that the increased hybridization of fact and fiction in reality programming, has also lead to programs that have become increasingly complex in its morality structures (Hawkins, 2001; Hill, 2005, 2007). Television news on the other hand, is often characterized by the

reduction of the (moral) complexity of themes it represents (Adoni, Cohen, & Mane, 1984; Iyengar & Kinder, 2010; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). This leads us to question if these outlined genre differences actually resonate in a differing presence of moral complexity in the various TV genres of prime time:

RQ5: Are there differences between genres in the presence of moral complexity presented in prime time television?

In sum, regarding morality in television content (stories) this study will explore presence and the different types of morality that are presented in prime time television as well as the presence of moral complexity, and its variations between genres. Furthermore, the study is also focused on discerning who formed the communities, or in terms of Tipton (2002) the institutional sectors of social life that served as beacons of accountability (i.e. since morality is in essence about being accountable for your actions to someone) for those moralities. And to discern which moral domains and themes dominated in which television genres since it reveals the televised public discourse of morality about the most valued (i.e. morally important) aspects of society as represented or mirrored on television.

6.3 Method

The main research goal was to explore the differences between genres regarding the representation of morality on the level of content of stories in prime time television. To meet this goal, a quantitative content analysis was conducted, based on a sample of Dutch prime-time television programs (2012) (N = 485).

6.3.1 Sample

This study analyzed a large scale sample of prime time television programming (18.00-00.00) aired in the Netherlands. The clustered sample includes 485 programs, from ten channels (Public: NL 1, 2, and 3; Commercial: RTL 4, 5, 7 and 8, Net5, Veronica and SBS6) aired on seventy consecutive evenings broadcasted in the period between March (19/3) and May (27/5) of 2012.

6.3.2 Codebook and coding procedures

In order to explore the representation of morality in prime time programs, the programs were coded on two different levels (general information, morality on story level and morality on cast level).

The first section encompassed general information about the *channel* (either Public - NL 1, 2, and 3 or Commercial -RTL 4, 5, 7 and 8, Net5, Veronica and SBS6),

the *genre cluster* the program belonged to (based on the results from study one: News and Information - for example news broadcasts, consumer programs and documentaries; Entertainment - for example reality programs, lifestyle programs, quizzes and game shows; Fiction – for example comedy, soaps, psychological drama and crime drama), and the *origin of the program* (i.e. the Netherlands, the United States, Germany, Great-Britain, France, Other, Not able to code).

The second section was focused on aspects of the *moral content* of the program (i.e. morality on story level). The choice was made to focus on up to ten items in non-fictional programs (News and information & Entertainment) and for fiction (similar to the approach used in the second study in this dissertation) only the main storyline per fiction program, based on the assumption that the most important/most morally laden information would be presented in the first 10 items in non-fiction programming and in the main storyline of fiction programming. For fiction programming the main storyline was defined as the storyline that takes up most of the screen time, and/or has the most characters involved in the progression of the narrative arc, and/or shows the most complexity in the problem-resolutions (Wester & Weijers, 2006). For the first ten items as well as the main storyline, we coded the ten variables (which were also coded in study three) as operationalizations of various aspects of moral content. The first variable was *moral domain* which was defined as the sphere of life in which the item or main storyline took place (cf. Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005) its coding categories were 'Family', 'Law, order and justice', 'Politics', 'Health(care)', 'Education and science', 'Culture, art, and media', 'Economy, finance and business', 'Leisure (romantic/friendship)', 'Sports', and 'Other'.

Secondly, we coded *moral theme*, which was divided in four main categories (cf. Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005; Tipton, 2002), which each had several subcategories, which can be found in Table 1. The main categories and the subthemes were extensively tested and pretested on material from different genres that was not part of the sample before the final coding of the material in the sample started. In this study the analysis was only conducted on the four main categories.

We then coded the *moral community* (Tamborini, Eden, Bowman, Grizzard & Lachlan, 2012; Tipton, 2002) for each item or main storyline, which we defined as a group of individuals with its own set of (behavioral) rules, obligations and commitments that individuals are held accountable to. We defined the different moral communities as follows:

- 1) '*Traditional or parental communities*': communities based on blood and identity - ranging from the family unit, and other parental institutions such as the army, towards the more abstract (national) community,

- 2) '*Institutional communities*': groups within the (democratic) organization of society in institutions,
- 3) '*Market related communities*': communities based on reciprocated (self) interests with a focus on success and capitalist thrift and trust, and
- 4) '*Chosen, light communities*': communities based on individual choice of participation based on tastes and (romantic /friendly) relations .

Table 1 Overview of coding categories for moral theme

Main categories of moral theme	Subdivision of moral themes
1) Issues and problems surrounding kinship & identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The battle between Good and Evil - Issues or problems with Marriage and (extended) family - Issues or problems with authority - Problems or issues connected to honor and shame - Other problems or issues relating to kinship & identity
2) Issues and problems in organized society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues or problems regarding politics - Issues or problems regarding the economy - Issues or problems regarding decisions over life and death - Issues or problems of order, safety and justice - Issues or problems connected to solidarity and humanity - Issues or problems connected to principles of law - Issues or problems connected to professionalism - Other problems or issues relating to organized society
3) Issues and problems in market relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues or problems connected to reciprocal trust - Issues or problems of honest competition - Issues or problems connected to efficiency and business - Other problems or issues relating to market relations
4) Issues and problems connected with freedom and individual expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues or problems connected with freedom and personal growth - Issues or problems connected with love and romance - Issues or problems connected with friendship - Issues or problems connected with pleasure, hedonism - Issues or problems with collective experience - Other problems or issues relating to freedom and individual expression
5) Other	

Since morality is tied to behavior and judgments (of others) about that behavior, we conceptualized the possibility that television programs in certain television genres might lack these characteristics. The presence of (a type of) morality (yes/no) in the item formed variable four. The instruction for this variable was: morality is generally present in all items, unless the item only focuses on

information without attention for judgments or problems (for example, the factual overview of the stock market or the weather forecast for the next day).

The coding of the presence (yes/no) of the different types of morality (based on Tipton, 2002): *authoritative morality*, *regulative morality*, *market morality* and *expressive morality* formed variables five through eight. The ninth variable that was coded was *moral complexity*, in which coders coded: 'No, moral complexity', 'Moral complexity: within one type of morality', 'Moral complexity: juxtaposition of two or more types of morality' or 'Moral complexity: conflict between two or more types of morality'.

6.3.3 Coder training and reliability

The coding itself was part of a specialized seminar on the methodology of content analysis for undergraduate students in Communication Science, in the spring of 2013. Forty coders (twenty-seven female and thirteen male Communication Science students) took part in the data collection. After several weeks of discussion, around thirty hours of intensive in-class coder training as well as independent practice on programs that were not part of the sample, and reliability checks, they coded a sample of 485 programs.

The coders worked individually, and around twenty percent ($n = 105$) of the programs in the present sample were double-coded. Coders consulted the primary researcher when there was disagreement, which was then resolved by the researcher. Based on this overlap the levels of inter-rater reliability were calculated using the macro by Hayes (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). The inter-rater reliability per variable can be found in Table 3. Taking Krippendorff's criteria for acceptable (.67) and good (.80) inter-rater reliability (2004, p.241), the Krippendorff's Alpha's were satisfactory overall, ranging from .74 to 1.00 (see Table 2).

6.4 Results

The sample of 485 programs contained a total of 1,633 items (i.e. fictional storylines or items in non-fictional programming). For the analysis, only those items that provided information for all moral content categories (moral community, moral domain, moral theme, and presence of morality) were included in the analysis. In other words, if one of the categories was not coded, coded as other, i.e. open ended category or coded as uncodeable this item was not used in the analysis, leaving 1,278 items for analysis.

Of the items 564 items (44.1%) were broadcast on a public channel and 714 items (55.9%) were broadcast on a commercial channel. Of those items, 1,030 (80.6%) were items from programs of Dutch origin, 176 (13.8%) were items from

Table 2 Levels of inter-rater reliability

Level of coding	Variables	Krippendorff's alpha
General	Channel	1.00
	Country of origin	1.00
Story-level	Content of the program	.92
	Moral domain	.82
	Moral theme	.74
	Moral community	.87
	Presence of morality	.78
	Authoritative morality	.87
	Regulative morality	.89
	Market morality	.86
	Expressive morality	.78
	Moral complexity	.77

programs of American origin, 1 (0.1%) item was from a program of German origin, 43 (3.4%) were items from programs of British origin, and 28 (2.2%) were items from programs of other origin. News and information programs supplied 684 items (53.5%) in the sample, 482 items (37.7%) were classified as part of an entertainment program, and 112 items (8.8%) were classified as the main storyline in a fiction program.

With regard to the differences between genres in the representation of morality in the content of items and storyline in prime time programming, the following aspects will be discussed consecutively moral themes, moral domains, moral community, presence of morality, different types of morality, presence of moral complexity and moral dominance.

Moral theme

The results (Table 3) demonstrated an overall significant difference between genres in the presence of moral themes ($\chi^2 (8, N = 1278) = 134.872$, *Cramer's V* = .230, $p < .001$). Overall, the most dominant group of moral themes is that of *organized society* (45.2%) (for example problems with order and safety or health), followed by moral themes connected to *freedom and individual expression* (18.2%) (for example problems with romantic love, autonomy or friendship), and moral themes connected to *market relations* (16.2%) (for example problems with competition or efficiency). Overall, the least prominent group of themes was connected to issues surrounding *kinship and identity*. Interestingly, only fiction

always included a moral theme in its storyline, while items purely based on factual information and therefore a lack of moral theme were present in news and information ($n = 77$, 11.3%) and entertainment ($n = 51$, 10.6%).

However, the adjusted standardized residuals reveal significant differences in this overall pattern between the genres. When compared with the other genres, the news and information genre showcases a predominance of moral themes connected to *organized society* (54.1%, adjusted residual = 6.8, $p < .001$), while the other three groups of themes all proved to be significantly less important to this genre (*kinship and identity*, 6.9%, adjusted residual = -3.8, $p < .001$; *market relations*, 14.2%, adjusted residual = -2.7, $p < .001$; *freedom and individual expression*, 13.6%, adjusted residual = -4.5, $p < .001$).

Table 3 Overview of differences between genres in presence of moral themes

	News and Information		Entertainment		Fiction		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
No moral theme	11.3	77	10.6	51	0.0	0	10.0	128
Kinship & identity	6.9	47	9.1	44	30.4*	34	9.8	125
Organized society	54.1*	370	34.9	168	35.7	40	45.2	578
Market relations	14.2	97	23.2*	112	5.4	6	16.8	215
Freedom & individual expression	13.6	93	22.2*	107	28.6*	32	18.2	232

Note: χ^2 (8, $N = 1278$) = 134.872, *Cramer's V* = .230, $p < 0.001$

*frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

The results for the entertainment genre reveal that moral themes connected to organized society were also the most dominant in this genre. However compared to the other genres, the entertainment genre showed an overrepresentation of moral themes connected to *market relations* (23.2%, adjusted residual = 4.8, $p < .001$), and *freedom and individual expression* (22.2%, adjusted residual = 2.9, $p < .001$).

Lastly, for the fiction genre there was always a moral theme, which is unlike the other genres. The results for fiction reveal that, compared to the other genres, the moral themes connected to *kinship and identity* (30.4%, adjusted residual = 7.7, $p < .001$) and themes connected to *freedom and individual expression* (28.6%, adjusted residual = 3.0, $p < .001$) are significantly overrepresented. Moral themes connected to *organized society* (although the most prevalent, 35.7%, adjusted

residual = -2.1, $p < .001$) and *market relations* (5.4%, adjusted residual = -3.4, $p < .001$) fell below expected proportions.

In sum, each genre showcased a predominance of the theme of organized society, and for news and information this theme was even significantly overrepresented. Entertainment and fiction both showcased a significant overrepresentation in the theme of freedom and individual expression, while entertainment also boasted a significant presence of the theme of market relations and fiction for kinship and society.

Moral domain

The results for moral domain (Table 4) reveal significant differences overall between genres regarding the presence of moral domains (χ^2 (16, $N = 1278$) = 452.215, *Cramer's V* = .421, $p < .001$). Overall, the most prominent moral domains are culture, art and media (21.2%), law, order and justice (18.6%), and politics (13.5%). However, the comparisons by adjusted standardized residuals reveal significant differences per genre from this overall pattern.

Table 4 Overview of differences between genres in presence of moral domains

	News and Information		Entertainment		Fiction		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Family	7.5	51	10.0	48	36.6*	41	11.0	140
Law, order, and justice	14.6	100	22.2*	107	27.7*	31	18.6	238
Politics	24.0*	164	1.5	7	1.8	2	13.5	173
Health(care)	5.0	34	5.2	25	2.7	3	4.9	62
Education and science	3.7*	25	0.6	3	0.9	1	2.3	29
Culture, art, and media	14.8	101	35.1*	169	0.9	1	21.2	271
Economy, finance, and business	10.7	73	9.5	46	0.9	1	9.4	120
Leisure, romance and friendship	2.9	20	12.7*	61	27.7*	31	8.8	112
Sports	17.0*	116	3.3	16	0.9	1	10.4	133

Note: χ^2 (16, $N = 1278$) = 452.215, *Cramer's V* = .421, $p < .001$

*frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

For the news and information genre, when compared with the other two genre-clusters, the results show a predominant attention for the domains of *politics* (24.0%, adjusted residual = 11.7, $p < .001$), *sports* (17.0%, adjusted residual = 8.2, $p < .001$), and *education and science* (3.7%, adjusted residual = 3.6, $p < .001$). For the entertainment genre, when compared with the other genres, the results reveal a specific attention to the domains of domain *law, order, and justice* (22.2%, adjusted residual = 2.6, $p < .001$), *culture, art, and media* (35.1%, adjusted residual = 9.4, $p < .001$), and *leisure, romance and friendship* (12.7%, adjusted residual = 3.8, $p < .001$). And lastly for the fiction genre, there is a predominant attention for the domain of *family* (36.6%, adjusted residual = 9.1, $p < .001$), *law, order, and justice* (27.7%, adjusted residual = 2.6, $p < .001$), and *leisure, romance and friendship* (27.7%, adjusted residual = 7.4, $p < .001$).

Comparing the genres we can conclude that the news and information genre is predominantly focused on the public domain, while the entertainment genre mixes both public and private domains and the fictional genre has some consideration for the public domain but is firmly entrenched in the private domain through its preoccupation with family and leisure, romance and friendship.

Moral community

The results with regard to the community that showed moral rejection or approval, proved to be quite different from the previous moral categories. Overall, the results reveal that there are significant differences between genres in the presence of moral communities ($\chi^2 (6, N = 1278) = 138.349$, *Cramer's V* = .233, $p < .001$). As can be seen in Table 5, there is only one strongly dominant type of moral community (i.e. the community of those who judged the actions of the persons/characters in the item or storyline) and that is the group of traditional or parental communities (i.e. the family, the village, or the nation at large). Overall, the traditional or parental community was the context of moral judgment in 84.7% of all items and storylines.

For each genre the traditional community is by far the dominant moral community, however the results also reveal that even in this dominant positions the presence for each genre still differs. The traditional community is comparatively starkly overrepresented in the news and information genre (92.3%, adjusted residual = 8.1, $p < .001$), and comparatively relatively underrepresented (but still the most dominant one) for the entertainment genre (77.4%, adjusted residual = -5.6, $p < .001$) and the fictional genre (69.6%, adjusted residual = -4.6, $p < .001$).

The results show a significant underrepresentation for all other communities in the news and information genre. Comparatively, the results reveal a significant overrepresentation of the institutional community (15.2%, adjusted residual = 3.1, $p < .001$) as well as the chosen, light communities (12.5%, adjusted residual = 7.6,

$p < .001$) in the fiction genre. Lastly, the market related community is significantly overrepresented in the entertainment genre (11.2%, adjusted residual = 7.3, $p < .001$).

Table 5 Overview of differences between genres in presence of moral communities

	News and Information		Entertainment		Fiction		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Traditional/parental communities	92.3*	631	77.4	373	69.6	78	84.7	1082
Institutional communities	6.0	41	8.5	41	15.2*	17	7.7	99
Market related communities	1.6	11	11.2*	54	2.7	3	5.3	68
Chosen, light communities	0.1	1	2.9	14	12.5*	14	2.3	29

Note: $\chi^2 (6, N = 1278) = 138.349$, *Cramer's V* = .233, $p < 0.001$

* frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

In sum, even though all genres showcase a predominant position of the traditional community as context of moral judgment and praise, the entertainment and fictional genre also reveal a genre-specific pattern of moral importance of the market related community in the case of entertainment and the institutional as well as chosen light community in the case of the fictional genre. As a result the fictional genre seems the most diverse in moral communities, i.e. the contexts in which moral judgment and moral praise are awarded to the characters.

Presence of (different types of) morality

Before the type of morality was coded, the presence of morality in general was determined. As outlined before, items in which purely informational content was represented, such as the weather or the stock exchange information, were defined as containing no morality. Overall, the results demonstrated distinct differences between genres ($\chi^2 (2, N = 1278) = 66.563$, *Cramer's V* = .228, $p < .001$) regarding the presence of morality in general in items or storylines (Table 6).

Table 6 Overview of differences between genres in presence of morality

	News and Information		Entertainment		Fiction		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Morality present in item/storyline	66.4	454	79.0	381	100.0	112	74.1	947
No morality present in item/storyline	33.6	230	21.0	101	0	0	25.9	331

Note: $\chi^2 (2, N = 1278) = 66.563$, *Cramer's V* = .228, $p < 0.001$

Of the total of 1,278 items and storylines, 74.1% ($n = 947$) contained a type of morality. As can be seen in Table 6, there are large differences between the genres in the presence of morality. There were no fictional storylines that did not integrate some type of morality, while morality was lacking in one third of the items in the news and information genre and in a fifth of the items in the entertainment genre.

Furthermore, significant differences were found between genres in the presence of the four different types of morality we defined. Overall (see Table 7), in the 947 items that were analyzed that showcased a type of morality, the authoritative morality was present 158 times (16.7% of the items), the regulative morality was present 428 times (45.2% of the items), the market morality 286 times (30.2% of the items) and the expressive morality 419 times (44.2% of the items). The combined total of morality types then is 1,291 in 947 items/storylines. These results indicate that in general each coded storyline or item that contained morality, embodied an average of 1.3 types of morality (i.e. indicative of moral complexity).

Additionally, the results reveal significant differences between genres regarding the presence of the four different types of morality. The authoritative morality (56.3%, adjusted residual = 12.0, $p < .001$) and the expressive morality (70.5%, adjusted residual = 6.0, $p < .001$) were significantly overrepresented in the fictional genre, while the regulative morality was significantly overrepresented (56.8%, adjusted residual = 6.9, $p < .001$) in the news and information genre. In the entertainment genre there was a significant overrepresentation of the market morality (34.6%, adjusted residual = 2.4, $p < .001$) as well as the expressive morality (51.7%, adjusted residual = 3.8, $p < .001$).

Table 7 Combined overview of differences between genres in presence of different types of morality

	News and Information		Entertainment		Fiction		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Authoritative morality ^a	10.8	49	12.1	46	56.3*	63	16.7	158
Regulative morality ^b	56.8*	258	34.4	131	34.8	39	45.2	428
Market morality ^c	30.4	138	34.6*	132	14.3	16	30.2	286
Expressive morality ^d	31.5	143	51.7*	197	70.5*	79	44.2	419

Note^a: $\chi^2 (2, N = 947) = 143.29$, *Cramer's V* = .389, $p < .001$; Note^b: $\chi^2 (2, N = 947) = 47.652$, *Cramer's V* = .224, $p < 0.001$; Note^c: $\chi^2 (2, N = 947) = 17.037$, *Cramer's V* = .134, $p < .001$; Note^d: $\chi^2 (2, N = 947) = 69.884$, *Cramer's V* = .272, $p < .001$

*frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

In all, each genre reveals a distinct pattern of dominant types of morality. In the news and information genre, the regulative type of morality is the most prevalent, while in the entertainment and fictional genre the expressive type of morality is the most prevalent one. These results reveal distinct differences in styles of moral reasoning per genre.

Moral complexity

With two or more types of morality present in television programs, moral complexity becomes a topic of interest. Overall (see Table 8), around two-thirds of the items showed no moral complexity (66.4%), while one-fifth of the items (21.6%) show a juxtaposition of morals, another tenth of the items showed conflicting moralities (10.6%), and almost no items (1.4%) showcased a complexity within one type of morality. The results reveal an overall significant difference between genres regarding the moral complexity present in items or storylines in prime time programming ($\chi^2 (6, N = 947) = 87.073$, *Cramer's V* = .214, $p < .001$).

Most prominently this difference is exemplified by news and information versus fiction, the entertainment genre literally falls in between. The news and information genre is the genre that significantly shows the proportional largest amount of items with no moral complexity (72.0%, adjusted residual = 3.5, $p < .001$), followed by juxtaposed moralities (19.2%) (i.e. moralities with similar weight in the issue/storyline), conflicting moralities (7.7%) and complexity in one type of morality (1.1%). For the entertainment genre, the proportionally largest

group is also with no moral complexity (68.5%), followed by juxtaposed moralities (22.8%), conflicting moralities (7.1%) and complexity in one type of morality (1.6%). Fiction proportionally shows the most moral complexity between different types of morality (33.9%, adjusted residual = 8.6, $p < .001$), followed by no moral complexity in 36.6% of the storylines, juxtaposed moralities in 27.7 % of the storylines and complexity in one type of morality in 1.8% of the storylines.

Table 8 Overview of genre-differences in moral complexity

	News and Information		Entertainment		Fiction		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
No moral complexity	72.0*	327	68.5	261	36.6	41	66.4	629
Complexity in one type of morality	1.1	5	1.6	6	1.8	2	1.4	13
Moralities juxtaposed	19.2	87	22.8	87	27.7	31	21.6	205
Conflicting moralities	7.7	35	7.1	27	33.9*	38	10.6	100

Note: $\chi^2 (6, N = 947) = 87.073$, Cramer's $V = .214$, $p < 0.001$

* frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

6.5 Discussion

The goal of the current study was to shed light on the possible genre specific differences in the representation of morality in prime time programming on the level of moral content. Following a recent trend in cultivation research that argued that specific genres might cultivate specific moral messages for viewers (cf. Bilandzic & Rössler, 2004; Cohen & Weimann, 2000; Hawkins & Pingree, 1981; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010), a distinction was made between the genre-clusters (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014): news and information, entertainment and fiction and the moral content of these genres were compared and contrasted.

The data revealed striking differences between the genres in the presence and prevalence of certain moral themes. All three genres dedicated the most time to themes connected to organized society (e.g. problems with health, justice and order). Comparatively, entertainment also devoted a significant amount of time on both market relations (i.e. problems relating to winning, competing, striving

for commercial success) and freedom and individual expression (i.e. problems relating to friendship, hedonism and romantic relationships), while fiction devoted a considerable amount of time to themes connected to kinship and identity (i.e. maintenance of the family) and freedom and individual expression. In sum, we can say that problems and issues concerned with organized society permeate all genres, indicating its overall importance in the public discourse on moral issues such as health, justice, safety and order. Moral pluriformity in themes between genres, arises especially in light of entertainment's focus on topics of individuality and self-expression as well as individual success, while fiction incorporates themes and problems from the private sphere (friendship, family, romance, self-development) into the televised discourse of morality.

Interesting differences between genres were also found regarding the distribution of moral domains. All three genres dedicated relatively similar proportions to the domain of law, order and justice, while news and information dedicated proportionally the most time to the domain politics, entertainment on culture, art and media and fiction on family (cf. Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014).

Based on the results for moral themes and domains, we can conclude that different genres foreground different aspects of society or social life as important, but also represent domains that are of general or overall importance (i.e. presence of domain of law, order and justice in all genres). The news and information genre informs us about problems of society as a whole, and more specifically about the institutions through which society is organized. The entertainment genre showcases a prevalence of the individual in an environment of winning and competition as well as surrounded by and involved with friends and romance. And comparatively the fiction genre, foregrounds problems of the private sphere – family, friends and romantic relationships. These results echo the idea that in moral terms television works both as a morally uniform message system (Gerbner, 1998a, 1998b) foregrounding certain themes and domains in all genres as well as a morally pluriform forum (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983, 1984) that reveal differences in emphasis on themes and domains between the genres. The results are also largely in line with the outcomes of qualitative and smaller scaled explorations of morality in prime time television (Costera Meijer & Krijnen, 2007; Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014).

Concerning the presence of various moral communities as beacons of accountability in the different genres (Luckmann, 2002; Tamborini, Eden, Bowman, Grizzard & Lachlan, 2012; Tipton, 2002), the genres reveal quite similar patterns. The traditional or parental community dominates in all genres, similar to the predominance of this community for fiction over time as reported by Daalmans, Hijmans, and Wester in 2013. The institutional community was the community

of secondary importance in all genres, which indicated that different institutions within organized society were the backdrop of accountability (i.e. professional institutions of for example health, law, and general politics). Genre differences became visible in the third most prominent community, which for news and information and entertainment is the market related community and for fiction the chosen, light communities.

In all of the fictional storylines there was a presence of a type of morality, while this was only the case in two-thirds of the news and information programming and eighty percent of the entertainment programming. When considering the presence of the various types of morality in different genres, the most dominant type of morality in news and information is the regulative morality, while in entertainment and in fiction it is the expressive type of morality. The predominance of the regulative morality in news and information as a genre, this is in line with previous research (cf. Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014). All formal types of morality formulated by Daalmans, Hijmans and Wester (2014) were also based on official codes of conduct, such as laws, treaties and regulations, which are also at the heart of the regulative type of morality which fuses rules, reason, knowledge and professionalism (cf. Tipton, 2002). The predominance of the expressive morality in fiction, reiterates the results found in a study of moral content in fiction (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2013), where the expressive morality was also found to be the most dominant in fictional programming overall and over time. Furthermore, news and information programming also showcased the market morality and the expressive morality in a third of its items that include morality, while entertainment programming showcases regulative and market morality in a third of its items and fiction showcases the authoritative and regulative morality in a third of its storylines.

Regarding moral complexity, which could either indicate the presence of several types of morality that could be conflicted or juxtaposed in one item or indicate the presence of different viewpoints from within one type of morality, news and information is the genre that offers the least moral complexity in its items (72%), followed by entertainment (68%) and then fiction (36.6%). Within the items that do show moral complexity, news and information and entertainment programming show a predominance of juxtaposed moralities, while fiction shows predominance for conflicting moralities. With regard to the news and information genre, the juxtaposing of moralities might be explained in terms of news objectivity and the ideal of presenting all sides of a story (cf. Soffer, 2009; Westerstahl, 1983). For entertainment the presence of juxtaposed moralities, is not as easily explained. The predominance of the conflicting moralities in fiction might be explained by the nature of fictional programming, where the plot is driven forward by internal conflict and struggle rather than juxtaposition and

neutrality (cf. Chatman, 1989; Vorderer & Knobloch, 2000; Wester & Weijers, 2006). In case of conflicting moralities, the regulative morality is dominant in the genres of news and information and fiction, while the entertainment genre shows a tie for dominance between the market morality and the expressive morality.

All in all, the overall presence of morality in all the studied fictional storylines (compared to only two-thirds in news and information and eighty percent in entertainment) as well as the largest presence of moral complexity in the fictional genre seemingly indicates that regarding moral content fiction is the most morally laden of the three genres. These findings tie in with critics and scholars who argue that the overall character of contemporary fictional programming has become increasingly morally complex (Dant, 2005; Johnson, 2005a, 2005b; Mittel, 2006) as well as those that state that entertainment programs have grown to sometime include more complex takes on moral issues (Hawkins, 2001; Hill, 2005, 2007). It seems that while fiction showcases the depth, range and complexity of moral issues and moral judgment, the news and information genre indeed harkens on the importance of clarity, straightforwardness and perhaps even simplicity in presenting (the justness of) moral judgment about issues and behaviors (Adoni, Cohen, & Mane, 1984; Iyengar & Kinder, 2010; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). Entertainment as a genre, based on our results, falls somewhere in between; sometimes choosing moral complexity to carve out details and complexity of moral issues and sometimes opting for moral clarity and simplicity.

6.6 Limitations and directions for future research

As with all studies, this study was not without limitations, which open up interesting avenues for further research. The choice to code only the main storyline for fiction (since it would hold the most important, central moral information), while for news and entertainment cluster we coded up to 10 items, resulted in differing of the subsample sets. And while the comparisons in the study were based on relative proportions, a more complete picture of television's public moral discourse would have been created by coding all fictional storylines per fiction program. The results however, do show that main storylines are already morally complex indicating that subplots might only replicate the presented picture. A suggestion of future research, even though it will result in an even more time consuming period of data collection, would be to include the complete content of all programs (i.e. all storylines and all items) regardless of the genre.

The chosen approach of three broad genre clusters (cf. Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2014) brings with it the necessity to focus on working out the intricacies of the representations of morality on the level of moral content on a more detailed level within the genre clusters. The study by Hastall, Bilandzic and Sukalla (2013) focused on norm violations within distinct drama types (i.e. crime, medical, comedy etc.) for example is a good start. It proved that within the fiction genre-cluster, there were large differences between subgenres such as medical dramas and crime dramas regarding their presentation of social norm violations (as a form of moral content). In other words, more research is needed to specify differences of the representation of morality within genre clusters. In this study the genre cluster of news and information, held programs that varied from news to documentaries, and the entertainment cluster held programs ranging from reality programs to game shows, these programs differ in their content and might therefore also differ in what they contribute to the televised public discourse of morality.

Even though our sample was very diverse in genres, it is also characterized to a large degree by news and information programming that was of Dutch origin, while the entertainment and fiction programming was to a large degree of American or other Anglo-Saxon origin. One might expect national differences between and within the genres if it contains a large degree of foreign made programs, since “every country’s television system reflects the historical, political, social, economic, and cultural contexts within which it has developed” (Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, & Signorielli, 1978, p. 178). However, Dutch broadcasters may simply select American programs that resemble Dutch productions (and as a results are therefore quite similar in its representation of morality); after all, media organizations want a large audience and will arguably choose (American or other foreign) programs in line with what they see as the Dutch audience conceptualization of public morality. New studies might focus on the representation of morality in moral content and moral casting of imported as well as nationally produced programming aired in a specific national broadcasting system.

Despite its limitation, the presented explorative study of genre differences in moral content in television programs provides a first empirical base for further research into differences between and in genres regarding the representation of morality on the level of televised moral content. This study provided a first descriptive account of TV genre commonalities regarding the representation of morality. It differentiated between moral themes, domains and types of morality as well as the presence of moral pluriformity between genres in moral themes and moral complexity, and thereby adds to the theoretical body of (mostly cultivation inspired) studies focusing on the nature and content of television

programming. The overall conclusion indicates that television at large presents an elaborated picture of diverse moral issues from several moral perspectives. More research is still needed to fully flesh out the differences regarding the representation of morality within the larger genre clusters, and the potential implications these genre differences in the representation of morality might have for viewers at large as well as viewers with distinct genre preferences that are enabled by technological changes in the media landscape (DVR, TiVo). And due to the fact that television and its stories continue to form an important aspect in viewers (un)conscious moral education (Bandura, 2002; Gerbner, 1998), and its impact on viewers moral constitutions will continue to be questioned and debated, continued explorations of televisions moral content will remain vital to balance the disputes ahead about the relationship between television and morality in our society.

7

CHAPTER

From good to bad, and everything in between: An analysis of genre-differences in the representation of moral nature¹

This study explores the presence of different moral natures – neutral, good, bad, ambivalent - and its association with socio-demographic characteristics in three television genres, through content analysis (N = 3,993). Results show that MACs (morally ambivalent characters) dominate the cast of fiction, while neutral characters form a majority in news and information programming. In all genres MACs are typed by social en professional transgression, while morally bad characters are typed by transgressions of the law. Lastly, while two-thirds of all transgressions are punished, morally bad characters are always punished while MACs more often get away without consequences.

¹ This chapter was accepted for publication as: Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2016). From good to bad, and everything in between: An analysis of genre-differences in the representation of moral nature. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality*.

7.1 Introduction

Television has traditionally focused on affirming and rewarding good characters and their deeds and punishing and bringing to justice evil and transgressive characters (Gerbner, 1995; Raney, 2005). From that vantage point, it seems that television has undergone a significant change: The morally ambivalent character (MAC) has become more and more present in popular television fiction and film, such as *The Sopranos*, *Mr. Robot*, *Dexter*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, and *House MD* (Raney & Janicke, 2013). The popularity of MACs has begun to cause concern in the public debate as well as a vested interest in the academic community (Askar, 2013; Polatis, 2014). One concern about the content that includes MACs, is that the morally conflicted content might tarnish the viewers moral compass, and as a result might lead to difficulties in coming to understand the difference between right and wrong (Askar, 2013; Polatis, 2014). While generally an ethical appraisal of the behavior of good and bad characters leads to a positive or negative valence, this is obviously more complex with MACs who intermix good and bad behavior and are not always punished when they exhibit bad behavior (Konijn & Hoorn, 2005; Raney & Janicke, 2013). Therefore, from a *social learning perspective* as well as a *cultivation perspective* (Bandura, 1977; Hastall, Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2013) it seems that a fear of moral relativism and a progression towards situational ethics permeate these debates (cf. Fletcher, 1966; Kamtekar, 2004). Taken together, these concerns about MACs are a new addition to the public, and scientific debate about morality and television. This age-old debate starts from the assumption that through the indirect experiences encountered through media exposure, viewers might get a distorted image of what is considered as normal, good and bad in society (Bandura, 1977; Gerbner, 1995).

However, the interest of the academic community in MACs has mostly been part of an endeavor to better understand media *enjoyment* and not public morality (e.g. Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2011; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012; Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2013). Most of the studies, grounded in the 'Affective Disposition Theory' (ADT), find that moral considerations are central to character liking which then influences our enjoyment (Raney, 2005; Zillmann & Bryant, 1975). And even though when strictly based on the ADT formula, viewers as untiring moral monitors would and should disapprove of ambivalent characters' actions thereby hindering their enjoyment, this does not seem to be the case (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2013; Raney & Janicke, 2013).

Given the focus of the academic community on the possible effects MACs might have on enjoyment and the prevalence of these characters it suggests, it seems strange that there are very few systematic studies of the actual prevalence of these characters in the television landscape as a whole. There are some case

studies focusing on the morally ambivalent main characters in television fiction (e.g. De Wijze, 2008; Keeton, 2002), and one systematic study which revealed an increase of morally ambivalent characters in fiction over time (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2013). Taken together, these studies reveal nothing about the presence of people of differing moral natures in the complete cast of TV. Furthermore, most studies also seem to tie moral ambivalence strongly to the realm of television fiction, while one might also argue that these characters are so well liked because they resemble people in real life who also hold both good and bad characteristics (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012; Konijn & Hoorn, 2005). Lastly, because the way we consume television has radically changed over the past decade and distinct genre-preferences might guide our viewing patterns (cf. Bilandzic & Rössler, 2004; Hawkins & Pingree, 1981), differentiating between the moral casting in distinct genres could reveal genre-specific conceptions of (non) ethical behavior that is cultivated through the behavior of good, bad and ambivalent characters. As such this study is the first to focus on exploring and describing the presence of moral ambivalence in the Dutch television landscape, and assessing if there are differences between genres.

7.2 Theoretical Frame and research questions

People today are born into a symbolic environment with television as its main source of daily information, thereby bringing virtually everyone into a shared culture. This shared culture is created (in part) through storytelling. Humans live in a world experienced, created and maintained largely through many different forms of storytelling (Fisher, 1984; Gottschall, 2012; Lévi-Strauss, 1979). Storytelling, thus plays a vital role in the (informal) enculturation of humans in society and stories are seen as one of the primary vehicles for the ritual maintenance of society's cherished morals and values over time (Carey, 1975). Before the mass media were instated, parents or community elders would tell stories to younger generations, like myths, to explain how the world works (Rosengren, 1984). Today, television acts as our main storyteller, integrating individuals into the established social order by offering certain models about appropriate values, behaviors, norms and ideas (Gerbner, 1995). As such, television is a product of society as ruminator, masticating essential categories and contradictions in everyday life through a message system of repetitive stories that preserve and legitimate the society's identity and social order.

In other words, television tells us "about life, people, places, striving, power, fate and family life. It presents the good and the bad, the happy and sad, the powerful and the weak, and lets us know who or what is a success or a failure"

(Signorielli & Morgan, 2001, p.335). As a result, televised stories represent *what* and *who* counts as good, important and valuable in our culture, through selecting and highlighting some aspects of our culture and some persons in our culture more frequently and diversely than others (Gerbner, 1995).

As outlined before, whereas a dramatic increase in morally ambivalent lead characters in contemporary television fiction was noted (Eden, Grizzard & Lewis, 2011; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2009), there is no indication of how moral nature is represented in other genres. Television fiction boasts traditional heroes and villains, or good and bad characters, and also a plethora of morally ambivalent characters (Daalmans, Hijmans & Wester, 2013). For news and information programming and reality- and entertainment programming, this empirical differentiation in terms of morality is lacking. While one might assume that the traditional categorization of good and evil, for objectivity's sake would be a hallmark for news and information programming (Baym, 2000), there is no evidence to substantiate this. Furthermore, some researchers have proposed that the popularity of reality genres might be due to the prevalence of morally ambivalent behavior (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012), suggesting that the cast of reality and entertainment programming might include many morally ambivalent persons. All in all, there is a lack of clarity regarding the moral casting of persons in different genres leading to the following research question:

RQ 1: *Does the distribution of characters with various moral natures (i.e. good, bad and ambivalent) differ across genres?*

Previous research, has shown that the television world over-represents certain demographic groups (i.e. adult men), while it under-represents others (i.e. women, the elderly, children), and as an aggregate these television messages transform into societal messages of *moral worth* (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli & Morgan, 1980). Furthermore, research by for example Koeman et al. (2007) provided evidence that in the Dutch television world there are distinct genre-differences in the degrees of over- and underrepresentation of certain socio-demographic groups. This could then be argued might lead to the cultivation of genre-specific societal messages of moral worth (cf. Cohen & Weiman, 2000). These results coupled with the idea of *moral casting* (Gerbner, 1995), leads to the question how moral nature is distributed over these groups and if there are genre-specific differences in this. Furthermore, when considering the fears concerning viewers' moral judgments becoming more relaxed as a result of seeing moral ambivalence and moral relativism (Askar, 2013; Polatis, 2014), coupled with the notion that people tend to emulate those who are like themselves it becomes important to assess what socio-demographic characteristics characters with varying moral

natures in different television genres have (Rai & Holyoak, 2013). This then leads to the second research question:

RQ 2: *Are there differences between genres in the association between moral nature and gender, age, and ethnicity?*

Television articulates and reveals the moral nature of its characters through their actions, and more importantly how they are judged and punished for those actions by the various communities they are a part of (Grabe, 2002; Hastall, Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2013). A study by Daalmans, Hijmans and Wester (2014) revealed that morality was connected to the actions of people and characters, either through transgression of commonly shared laws, norms and values or by exemplifying commonly shared ideals by their behavior. Research by Grabe (2002) also points in this direction, since it revealed that in *The Jerry Springer Show* all of the committed social transgressions were punished either via the audience or the host, thereby reestablishing the moral order.

Furthermore, other research into popular reality programming focused on transforming subjects reveals that it is often a preoccupied with subjects being seen as transgressing the boundaries of what is deemed as normal or *morally good* (Inthorne & Boyce, 2010; Rich, 2011; Skeggs & Wood, 2012). From programs focused on regulating the obese body (e.g. *The Biggest Loser*), to parents who neglect proper nutrition in the meals of their children (e.g. *Honey, We're Killing The Kids*), and improperly dressed men and women (e.g. *What Not To Wear*). The value of normal, and moral, personhood is regimented not by punishment in a straightforward sense, but by rules and advice and inciting shame and guilt (*in essence* social punishment) (Skeggs & Wood, 2012).

All in all, previous research has revealed distinct combinations of transgressions of the law, social transgressions as well as professional transgression and subsequent forms of punishment in fictional television as well as specific types of reality programming. What is lacking is: a) an examination of the transgression-punishment representation in the news and informational genre, b) an examination of the transgression-punishment representation in the reality genre as a whole (which is more than just transformational reality TV), and c) a comparison of possible differences in the representation of transgression and punishment in the different genres directly informed by the notion that different genres might cultivate specific moral worldviews (Bilandzic & Rössler, 2004). This leads to the last two research questions of the current study:

RQ 3: *Are there differences between genres in the association between moral nature and committed transgressions?*

RQ 4: *Are there differences between genres in the association between moral nature and the punishment that follows transgressions?*

7.3 Method

The main research goal was to explore the differences between genres regarding the representation of moral nature in prime time television. To meet this goal, a quantitative content analysis was conducted, based on a sample of Dutch prime-time television programs (2012) (N = 485).

7.3.1 Sample

This study analyzed a large scale sample of prime time television programming (18.00-00.00) aired in the Netherlands. The clustered sample includes 485 programs, from ten channels (Public: NL 1, 2, and 3; Commercial: RTL 4, 5, 7 and 8, Net5, Veronica and SBS6) aired on seventy consecutive evenings broadcasted in the period between March (19/3) and May (27/5) of 2012.

7.3.2 Codebook and coding procedures

The programs were first coded for general information. The first being, *channel* (either Public - NL 1, 2, and 3 or Commercial -RTL 4, 5, 7 and 8, Net5, Veronica and SBS6). The second being *genre* cluster the program belonged to (i.e. *News and Information* – which for example included news broadcasts, consumer programs and documentaries; *Entertainment* – which for example included reality programs, lifestyle programs, quizzes and game shows; and *Fiction* – which for example included comedy, soaps, psychological drama and crime drama) (Daalmans, Hijmans & Wester, 2014; Emons, 2011). The third aspect that was coded was the *origin of the program* (i.e. the Netherlands, the United States, Germany, Great-Britain, France, Other, Not able to code).

The unit of analysis was the *main persons and main characters* of the program. For non-fictional programming, this meant that the (up to eight) figures that we (re)presented in the item that had the most speaking and/or screen time were coded. For non-fictional content we coded up to ten items per program, based on the idea that the most prominent, newsworthy and/or most morally laden items would be featured first in both news and entertainment (cf. Hill, 2005; Scott & Gobetz, 1992). For fictional programming, the (up to eight) main characters of the main storyline were coded, based on the assumption that they are the carriers of the most important storyline and therefore embody important moral characteristics. A main character was defined as a character who plays a leading role, is the carrier of a storyline and is thereby indispensable to the narrative (Egri, 1960; Weijers, 2014).

For the main persons (figures) and characters we coded demographic categories, transgression, consequences and moral nature. *Gender*, the coding categories for gender of the main character were male; female; male animated/creature; female animated/creature or other (Emons, 2011). In the analysis, only the categories (human) male and female were used.

The coding categories for *age of the main character* reflected five life cycles, and the coders were instructed to establish the age of the character by determining which age group or life stage (i.e. child: 0-12 years, teenager: 13-18 years, young adult: 19-29 years, adult: 30-64 years or elderly: 65 and older) the character was supposed to represent (Emons, 2011; Koeman, Peeters & D’Haenens, 2007). Age was later recoded in the analysis, child and teenager were combined while the other categories were maintained.

Ethnicity was coded as ‘Caucasian/white’, ‘Black’, ‘Asian’, ‘Mediterranean – Arabic’, ‘Mediterranean – Europe’, ‘South/Latin-American’ or ‘Other’ (Emons, 2011; Koeman et al., 2007). For the analysis, ‘Mediterranean – Europe’, ‘South/Latin American’, and ‘Other’ were combined in the Other category, due to low cell frequencies.

For each person or character the variable *transgression* was coded, to discern if the character committed any transgression (yes/no). If a transgression was committed, then it was coded what type of transgression it was – transgression of law, professional transgression or a social transgression (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2013; Grabe, 2002; Hastall, Sukalla, & Bilandzic, 2013). The presence of each or these types of transgression were recorded individually, since one person or character could commit more than one type of transgression. Furthermore, these three types of transgression were also divided into subcategories (see Table 1).

The coders were instructed that they could only code behavior as transgressive if: a) behavior was unambiguously transgressive within the predefined forms of transgression (i.e. law, profession or social) and/or b) if other characters (visually or verbally) condemned or identified the behavior of the character as such (the underlying idea being that we are held accountable by others). In the analysis, the different types of transgressions were recoded as dichotomous variables (transgression of the law: yes/no, professional transgression: yes/no, social transgression: yes/no). When the presence of a transgression was coded, then the *consequences of the transgression* were also coded in the following categories: ‘No, consequences’, ‘Transgression is punished’, ‘Transgression is rewarded’, ‘Transgression produces mixed/ambivalent consequences’, ‘Other’. Consequences were later recoded for analysis into ‘No, consequences’, ‘Punishment’, ‘Reward’, and ‘Other’.

Table 1 Overview of coding categories per type of transgression

Type of transgression	Coding categories
Transgression of the law	- ‘Does not commit any transgression of the law’ - ‘Commits a violent transgression’ - ‘Commits a sexual offence’ - ‘Commits a financial offence’ - ‘Commits another type of transgression of law’ (open category)
Professional transgression	- ‘Does not commit any professional transgression’ - ‘Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct’ - ‘Behavior is characterized as incompetent’ - ‘Commits insubordination’ - ‘Commits another type professional transgression’ (open category)
Social transgression	- ‘Does not commit any social transgression’ - ‘Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats’ - ‘Displays relational infidelity’ - ‘Breaks the bonds of parental trust’ - ‘Displays indecent, inappropriate or vulgar behavior’ - ‘Commits another type social transgression’ (open category)

The *moral nature* of each main character was coded as good, bad, ambivalent, neutral or unable to code. Moral nature had to be determined by behavior of the person/character (i.e. transgressions committed) as well as the verbal judgment of persons/characters of that behavior. Good persons/characters were categorized as such if they were good in their goals, motivations, intentions and other observable behavior (i.e. committed no transgressions or only minor transgression) and they received no criticism or other negative judgments from others. Bad persons/characters were categorized as such if their observable behavior could be typed as evil or bad (in goals, motivations or intentions), if they committed severe transgressions and were judged for them by others. Ambivalent persons/characters were categorized as such if their observable behavior is categorized by both good and bad with regard to goals, intentions and motivations (for example doing the wrong things for the right reasons), as exemplified by the verbal praise of judgment from others. Neutral persons/characters have no goals, commit no transgressions and function purely as a source of (professional) information in an item (the reporter in the news broadcast, the weatherman in the news, the person informing viewers about the statistics of the stock market of the day).

7.3.3 Coder training and reliability

The coding itself was part of a specialized seminar on the methodology of content analysis for undergraduate students in Communication Science, in the spring of 2013. Forty coders took part in the data collection. After several weeks of discussion, around thirty hours of intensive in-class coder training as well as independent practice on programs that were not part of the sample, and reliability checks, they coded a sample of 485 programs.

The coders worked individually, and around twenty percent ($n = 105$) of the programs in the present sample were double-coded. Coders consulted the primary researcher when there was disagreement, which was then resolved by the researcher. Based on this overlap the levels of inter-rater reliability were calculated using the macro by Hayes (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007) which is reported in Table 2. Taking Krippendorff's criteria for acceptable (.67) and good (.80) inter-rater reliability (2004, p.241), the Krippendorff's Alpha's were good overall, ranging from .91 to 1.00.

Table 2 Levels of inter-rater reliability

Level of coding	Variables	Krippendorff's alpha
General	Channel	1.00
	Country of origin	1.00
	Genre	.92
Cast-level	Gender	.92
	Age	.91
	Ethnicity	.92
	Moral nature	.96
	Transgression	.98
	Transgression of law	1.00
	Professional transgression	.92
	Social transgression	.95
	Consequences	.94

7.4 Results

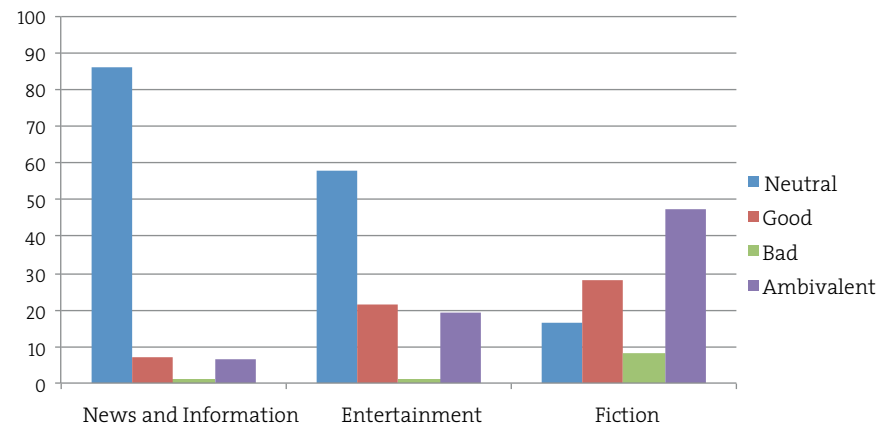
The sample of 485 programs contained a total of 1,278 items (i.e. fictional storylines or items in non-fictional programming) for analysis. News and information programs supplied 684 items (53.5%) in the sample, 482 items (37.7%) were classified as part of an entertainment program, and 112 items (8.8%) were classified as the main storyline in a fiction program.

The total cast that was coded in the sample consisted of 3,993 persons ($N = 3,993$). Of the cast 62.8% was male ($n = 2507$), and 37.2% was female ($n = 1486$). The age-composition of the cast was made up as follows: children 2.9%, teenagers 4.4%, young adults 29.1%, adults 57.5% and seniors 6.1%. The ethnic make-up of the cast consisted persons that were: 85% Caucasian, 4.7% Black, 2.4% Asian, 4.0% Mediterranean – Arabic, 1.6% Mediterranean – Europe, 2.0% South/Latin-American and 0.3% other ethnicities.

Moral nature

The results, as presented in Figure 1, revealed an overall significant difference between genres regarding the distribution of persons and characters of various moral natures ($\chi^2 (6, N = 3993) = 1149.962$, *Cramer's V* = .379, $p < 0.001$). Overall, two-thirds of the persons and characters (61.4%) were categorized as neutral, a small fifth was categorized as ambivalent (19.3%), seventeen percent was categorized as good (17.0%) and a very small portion (2.3%) was categorized as bad.

The adjusted standardized residuals reveal distinct genre differences that deviate from this overall pattern. Comparatively, news and information has an overrepresentation of neutral persons and characters ($n = 1,364$, 85.9%, adjusted residual = 25.9, $p < .001$), followed by very small portions of good ($n = 111$, 7.0%), ambivalent ($n = 100$, 6.3%), and bad persons ($n = 12$, 0.8%). Almost two-thirds of the persons and characters in the entertainment genre were coded as neutral ($n = 966$, 58.0%), a small portion is bad ($n = 20$, 1.2%) and almost a fifth of the cast is morally ambivalent ($n = 320$, 19.2%). Comparatively, the cast of entertainment hosts an overrepresentation of morally good persons and characters ($n = 360$, 21.6%, adjusted residual = 6.5, $p < .001$). The results for the fictional genre reveal it to be a mirror image of news and information, since it comparatively has an overrepresentation of morally good ($n = 209$, 28.2%, adjusted residual = 9.0, $p < .001$), morally bad ($n = 60$, 8.1%, adjusted residual = 11.7, $p < .001$) and morally ambivalent characters ($n = 351$, 47.4%, adjusted residual = 21.5, $p < .001$). Neutral characters comprise only 16.2% of the cast of fiction, which is the lowest proportion comparatively.

Figure 1 Distribution of moral natures per genre

Moral nature and demographic characteristics

Gender

The results with regard to the distribution of the various moral natures over male and female persons and characters (Table 3), reveal that overall there are significant gendered differences in the moral make-up of prime time programming ($\chi^2(3, N = 3993) = 26.817$, *Cramer's V* = .082, $p < 0.001$). Overall, men are significantly overrepresented as neutral (adjusted residual = 3.3, $p < .001$) and bad (adjusted residual = 2.5, $p < .001$), while women are significantly overrepresented as good persons and characters (adjusted residual = 4.4, $p < .001$). The overall results reveal a relative gender-neutrality when it comes to moral ambivalence.

The results also reveal that there are significant gendered differences in the moral make up within the cast of news and information ($\chi^2(3, N = 1587) = 14.204$, *Cramer's V* = .095, $p < .01$). For news and information, the adjusted standardized residuals reveal that contrary to the overall pattern: neutral females (adjusted residual = 3.4, $p < .01$) and good men (adjusted residual = 2.1, $p < .01$) are overrepresented, while the overrepresentation of bad men (adjusted residual = 2.3, $p < .01$) is in line with the described overall pattern for prime time programming as a whole.

For the entertainment genre, the results also indicate significant gendered differences in the moral make up of the cast ($\chi^2(3, N = 1666) = 16.806$, *Cramer's V* = .100, $p < .01$). In line with the described overall pattern, the cast of entertainment programs reveal an overrepresentation of neutral men (adjusted residual = 3.9, $p < .01$) and good women (adjusted residual = 2.9, $p < .01$). Contrary to the overall

Table 3 Combined overview of genre-differences in association of moral nature and gender

	News and Information ^a		Entertainment ^b		Fiction ^c		Total ^d	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Neutral	84.0	90.5*	62.1*	52.6	15.5	17.4	63.3*	58.1
Good	7.9*	5.0	19.1	25.0*	23.8	35.2*	15.0	20.5*
Bad	1.1*	0.0	1.4	1.0	9.7*	5.6	2.8*	1.5
Ambivalent	7.1	4.5	17.5	21.5*	51.0*	41.8	18.9	19.9
<i>n</i>	1105	482	949	717	453	287	2507	1486

Note: ^a $\chi^2(3, N = 1587) = 14.204$, *Cramer's V* = .095, $p < 0.01$; ^b $\chi^2(3, N = 1666) = 16.806$, *Cramer's V* = .100, $p < 0.01$; ^c $\chi^2(3, N = 740) = 15.267$, *Cramer's V* = .144, $p < 0.01$; ^d $\chi^2(3, N = 3993) = 26.817$, *Cramer's V* = .082, $p < 0.001$

*Frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

pattern of gender neutrality in moral ambivalence, the cast of entertainment programming also shows an overrepresentation of ambivalent women (adjusted residual = 2.0, $p < .01$).

Lastly, the fictional genre also revealed gendered differences in the moral make up of its cast ($\chi^2(3, N = 740) = 15.267$, *Cramer's V* = .144, $p < .01$). Similar to the overall pattern, the cast of fiction showcases an overrepresentation of good women (adjusted residual = 3.3, $p < .01$) and bad men (adjusted residual = 2.0, $p < .01$), and contrary to the overall pattern of gender neutrality regarding moral ambivalence an overrepresentation of ambivalent men (adjusted residual = 2.4, $p < .01$).

In sum, each genre reveals a unique gendered pattern in the distribution over moral natures. News and information harbor an overrepresentation of good men, while good women are overrepresented in the entertainment and fictional genre. And while the fictional genre reveals no gendered differences in moral neutrality, the news and information genre holds an overrepresentation of neutral women and entertainment of neutral men. The association of males with moral badness holds up in the news and information genre as well as the fictional genre, but there are no gendered differences in badness in the entertainment genre. And while overall and in the news and information genre, moral ambivalence is seemingly gender-neutral, the entertainment cast boasts an overrepresentation of ambivalent females and fiction of ambivalent males.

Age

The results with regard to the distribution of the various moral natures over the different age categories (Table 4), reveal that overall there are significant age differences in the moral make-up of prime time programming (χ^2 (9, N = 3993) = 159.026, *Cramer's V* = .115, $p < .001$). Overall, the results reveal a pattern of exceeded expected frequencies for neutral adults (adjusted residual = 9.0, $p < .001$), neutral seniors (adjusted residual = 2.9, $p < .001$), good children and teenagers (adjusted residual = 4.0, $p < .001$), good young adults (adjusted residuals = 6.0, $p < .001$), bad adults (adjusted residual = 2.2, $p < .001$), and ambivalent young adults (adjusted residual = 8.0, $p < .001$).

Furthermore, when looking at the moral make up of casts of the different genres, interesting age-patterns are revealed. The results reveal that there are significant age differences in the moral make up within the cast of news and information (χ^2 (9, N = 1587) = 55.957, *Cramer's V* = .108, $p < 0.001$). Similar to the described overall pattern, the cast of news and information programming showcases an overrepresentation of neutral adults (adjusted residual = 3.5, $p < .001$) and good young adults (adjusted residual = 5.9, $p < .001$). Contrary to the overall patterns, the cast of news and information programming also has an overrepresentation of neutral children and teenagers (adjusted residual = 2.4, $p < .001$) and bad young adults (adjusted residual = 2.0, $p < .001$).

With regard to the cast of entertainment programming, the results indicate significant age differences in its moral make up (χ^2 (9, N = 1666) = 110.453, *Cramer's V* = .149, $p < 0.001$). Similar to the described overall pattern, the cast of

entertainment programs hosts an overrepresentation of neutral adults (adjusted residual = 6.2, $p < .001$), neutral seniors (adjusted residual = 2.2, $p < .001$), good children and teenagers (adjusted residual = 6.7, $p < .001$), and ambivalent young adults (adjusted residual = 7.5, $p < .001$).

The cast of fictional programming also reveals significant age differences in its moral make up (χ^2 (9, N = 740) = 43.722, *Cramer's V* = .140, $p < 0.001$). In line with the pattern described for prime time programming as a whole, within the cast of fictional programs good young adults (adjusted residual = 2.9, $p < .001$) and bad adults (adjusted residual = 4.0, $p < .001$) exceeded expected frequencies, while contrary to the overall pattern the results also revealed exceeded expected frequencies for neutral children and teenagers (adjusted residual = 4.3, $p < .001$) in fiction.

In sum, each genre reveals a distinctly different age distribution in moral natures. For the news and information genre, the most dominant moral nature in all age categories is moral neutrality. Nevertheless, the news and information moral neutrality is even overrepresented for children and teenagers and adults. The news and information cast also hosts an overrepresentation of good and bad young adults and an age-neutrality for moral ambivalence. For the entertainment genre, the cast reveals an overrepresentation of good children and teenagers, neutral adults and seniors and ambivalent young adults as well as an age-neutrality for moral badness. Lastly, in fiction the results reveal an overrepresentation of neutral children and teenagers, good young adults and morally bad adults and relative age-neutrality for moral ambivalence.

Table 4 Combined overview of genre-differences in association of moral nature and age

	News and Information ^a				Entertainment ^b					Fiction ^c				Total ^d			
	CT	YA	A	E	CT	YA	A	E		CT	YA	A	E	CT	YA	A	E
Neutral	93.6*	77.4	88.1*	81.9	41.2	48.7	64.9*	69.5*	Neutral	32.9*	14.9	12.5	27.3	58.8	48.4	67.3*	70.2*
Good	5.5	14.8*	4.4	11.0	48.0*	21.2	18.8	22.0	Good	24.1	34.6*	25.6	15.2	25.4*	22.6*	13.3	15.3
Bad	0.0	1.6*	0.5	1.6	0.0	1.0	1.6	0.0	Bad	5.1	4.1	12.3*	3.0	1.4	1.9	2.7*	1.2
Ambivalent	0.9	6.2	7.0	5.5	10.8	29.0*	14.7	8.5	Ambivalent	38.0	46.5	49.6	54.5	14.4	27.1*	16.6	13.2
<i>n</i>	110	305	1045	127	102	589	893	82	<i>n</i>	79	269	359	33	291	1163	2297	242

Note. CT: Child and Teenager, YA: Young Adult, A: Adult, E: Elderly.
^a χ^2 (9, N = 1587) = 55.957, *Cramer's V* = .108, $p < 0.001$; ^b χ^2 (9, N = 1666) = 110.453, *Cramer's V* = .149, $p < 0.001$; ^c χ^2 (9, N = 740) = 43.722, *Cramer's V* = .140, $p < 0.001$; ^d χ^2 (9, N = 3993) = 159.026, *Cramer's V* = .115, $p < 0.001$
* Frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

Ethnicity

The chi-square analyses revealed significant overall differences in the distribution the various moral natures over the different categories of ethnicity (Table 5) in prime time programming as a whole ($\chi^2 (12, N = 3993) = 39.132$, *Cramer's V* = .057, $p < .001$). The results reveal a pattern of overrepresentation for neutral Arabic persons and characters (adjusted residual = 2.5, $p < .001$), bad Arabic persons and characters (adjusted residual = 2.9, $p < .001$) as well as ambivalent black persons and characters (adjusted residual = 2.4, $p < .001$).

Results also demonstrate significant differences for the news and information genre regarding the distribution the various moral natures over the different categories of ethnicity ($\chi^2 (12, N = 1587) = 36.404$, *Cramer's V* = .087, $p < .001$). Adjusted standardized residuals reveal that similar to the described overall pattern, news and information showcases an overrepresentation of bad Arabic persons and characters (adjusted residual = 5.0, $p < .001$).

For the cast of entertainment programming, results also indicate significant differences in the distribution the various moral natures over the different categories of ethnicity ($\chi^2 (12, N = 1666) = 62.404$, *Cramer's V* = .112, $p < .001$). Contrary to the pattern described for prime time programming as a whole, the reality genre shows an overrepresentation of neutral Caucasian persons and characters (adjusted residual = 3.1, $p < .001$) and bad black persons and characters (adjusted residual = 3.0, $p < .001$).

In line with the overall pattern, the results reveal an overrepresentation of ambivalent black persons and characters (adjusted residual = 2.8, $p < .001$) and bad

Arabic persons and characters (adjusted residual = 2.0, $p < .001$) for entertainment programming.

Lastly for the cast of fictional programming, the results also reveal a significant differences in the distribution of various moral natures over the different categories of ethnicity ($\chi^2 (12, N = 740) = 26.256$, *Cramer's V* = .109, $p < .05$). Contrary to the pattern described for prime time programming as a whole, fictional programming reveals an overrepresentation of ambivalent Caucasians (adjusted residual = 2.7, $p < .05$) and neutral Asians (adjusted residual = 2.5, $p < .05$). In sum, it seems that patterns of association between ethnicity and moral nature show similarity and difference per genre. Overall, we see an overrepresentation of neutral and bad Arab persons and characters and ambivalent black persons and characters. In the news, we only see an overrepresentation of bad Arab persons and characters, while in the entertainment genre neutral Caucasians, bad Arabs and bad and ambivalent blacks are overrepresented. Lastly, fiction surprisingly reveals an overrepresentation over neutral Asians and Caucasian ambivalence.

Moral nature, transgressions and punishment

In the presentation of the results on transgression and consequences, it is important to note the absence of neutral persons and characters (who have no goals, commit no transgressions).

In general, of the total cast of 1,543 persons that are good, bad or ambivalent 48.2% ($n = 744$) commit a transgression. Distinct genre-differences in transgressive

Table 5 Combined overview of genre-differences in association of moral nature and ethnicity

News and Information ^a											Entertainment ^b					Fiction ^c					Total ^d				
	C	B	AS	AR	O	C	B	AS	AR	O		C	B	AS	AR	O	C	B	AS	AR	O				
N	86.2	90.6	89.3	81.6	83.1	59.6*	39.8	57.4	54.3	51.8	N	15.1	21.7	40.0*	36.4	7.1	61.6	49.7	63.9	70.6*	59.6				
G	7.1	3.8	3.6	8.7	5.1	21.4	25.0	20.4	28.3	19.3	G	27.1	32.6	46.7	27.3	50.0	16.8	20.9	19.6	15.6	16.7				
B	0.4	1.9	3.6	4.9*	0.0	0.4	4.5*	3.7	4.3*	7.2	B	8.6	2.2	0.0	18.2	7.1	2.0	3.2	3.1	5.6*	4.5				
A	6.3	3.8	3.6	4.9	11.9	18.6	30.7*	18.5	13.0	21.7	A	49.2*	43.5	13.3	18.2	35.7	19.6	26.2*	13.4	8.1	19.2				
n	1344	53	28	103	59	1395	88	54	46	83	n	654	46	15	11	14	3393	187	97	160	156				

Note. C: White/Caucasian, B: Black, AS: Asian, AR: Arabic, O: Other ethnicity.

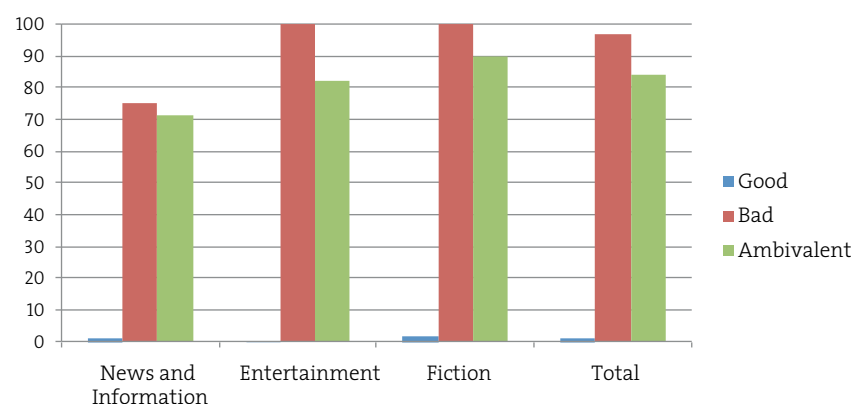
^a $\chi^2 (12, N = 1587) = 36.404$, *Cramer's V* = .087, $p < .001$; ^b $\chi^2 (12, N = 1666) = 62.404$, *Cramer's V* = .112, $p < .001$; ^c $\chi^2 (12, N = 740) = 26.256$, *Cramer's V* = .109, $p < .05$; ^d $\chi^2 (12, N = 3993) = 39.132$, *Cramer's V* = .057, $p < .001$

*Frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

behavior become clear when we consider the division of the cast along the line of inclusion of transgressors. For the news and information genre, 36.3% ($n = 81$) of its cast commits a transgression, of the entertainment cast 40.6% ($n = 284$) commits a transgression, and of the fictional cast 61.1% ($n = 379$) commits a transgression. The cast of fictional genre therefore hosts a much larger proportion of transgressive persons than either the news and information or the entertainment genre.

The overall results revealed significant differences between the persons and characters of various moral natures and the perpetration of transgression ($\chi^2(2, N = 1543) = 1102.938$, *Cramer's V* = .845, $p < .001$). Of the total cast of bad characters a majority committed a transgression ($n = 89$, 96.7%, adjusted residual = 9.6, $p < 0.001$), of the total cast of ambivalent characters 84.3% ($n = 650$, adjusted residual = 28.4, $p < .001$) committed a transgression and of all good characters a negligible amount committed a transgression ($n = 5$, 0.7%). This overall pattern (Figure 2), of significant differences between the good persons and characters that committed virtually no transgressions and the large proportions of the cast of bad and ambivalent persons and characters that did commit transgressions was found for all the individual genres (news and information: $\chi^2(2, N = 223) = 119.966$, *Cramer's V* = .733, $p < .001$, entertainment: $\chi^2(2, N = 700) = 501.568$, *Cramer's V* = .846, $p < .001$, fiction: $\chi^2(2, N = 620) = 474.946$, *Cramer's V* = .875, $p < .001$).

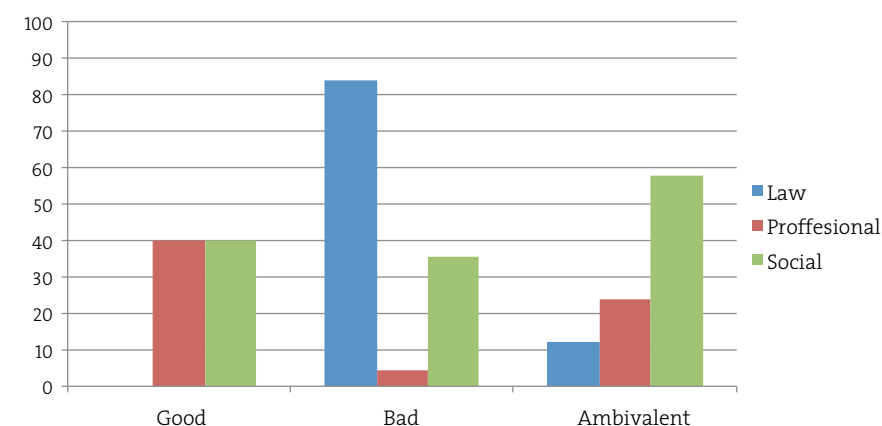
Figure 2 Transgressions committed by persons of various moral natures per genre



This association between moral nature and transgressions was further explored, by analyzing the three distinct sets of transgressions (transgression of the law, professional transgression and social transgression) in general (Figure 3) and per genre (Figure 4).

Overall (see Figure 3), the results reveal that of the very small amount of good persons that commit a transgression in general ($n = 5$), these transgressions are made up out of professional transgressions and social transgressions. For the bad characters that commit a transgression, the majority of those transgressions are transgressions of the law, followed by social transgressions and a small proportion of professional transgressions. For ambivalent transgressors, the majority of transgressions are social in nature, followed by professional transgressions and a small proportion of transgressions of the law.

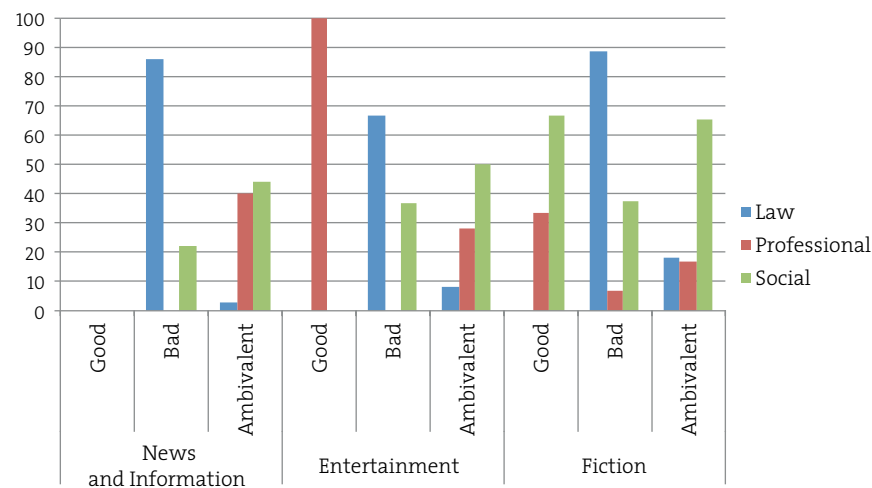
Figure 3 Types of transgressions committed by persons of various moral natures



The overall results hereby reveal a significant overrepresentation of morally bad characters in the category of transgressions of the law (adjusted residual = 14.4, $\chi^2(2, N = 673) = 208.792$, *Cramer's V* = .557, $p < .001$), a significant overrepresentation of morally ambivalent characters in the category of professional transgressions (adjusted residual = 3.9, $\chi^2(2, N = 736) = 18.444$, *Cramer's V* = .158, $p < .001$) as well as a significant overrepresentation of morally ambivalent characters in the category of social transgressions (adjusted residual = 3.9, $\chi^2(2, N = 654) = 14.913$, *Cramer's V* = .151, $p < .01$). In sum, overall it seems that morally bad characters can be typed by their association with transgressions of the law, while ambivalent characters can be typed by their association with both professional and social transgressions.

The results for types of transgression committed by persons of various moral natures per genre (Figure 4), revealed interesting similarities and differences from the overall presented distribution (Figure 3).

Figure 4 Combined overview of types of transgressions committed by persons of various moral natures per genre



For the news and information genre, the results reveal significant differences between the various moral natures in the committing of a transgression of the law ($\chi^2 (1, N = 71) = 43.048$, *Cramer's V* = .779, $p < .001$), and professional transgressions ($\chi^2 (2, N = 80) = 6.154$, *Cramer's V* = .277, $p < .05$). In line with the overall pattern, the results for the news and information genre showcase an overrepresentation of morally bad characters who commit transgressions of the law (adjusted residual = 6.6, $p < .001$), and morally ambivalent characters who commit a professional transgression (adjusted residual = 2.5, $p < .05$). With regard to social transgressions committed in the news and information genre, there were no significant differences between the different moral natures in committing them ($\chi^2 (2, N = 67) = 2.198$, *Cramer's V* = .181, $p > .05$).

For the entertainment genre, the results reveal significant differences between the various moral natures in the committing of a transgression of the law ($\chi^2 (2, N = 254) = 48.176$, *Cramer's V* = .436, $p < .001$), and professional transgressions ($\chi^2 (2, N = 283) = 10.393$, *Cramer's V* = .192, $p < .01$). In line with the overall pattern, the results for the entertainment genre showcase an overrepre-

sentation of morally bad characters who commit transgressions of the law (adjusted residual = 6.9, $p < .001$), and morally ambivalent characters who commit a professional transgression (adjusted residual = 2.3, $p < .01$). With regard to social transgressions in the entertainment genre, similar to the news and information genre, there were no significant differences between the different moral natures in committing them ($\chi^2 (2, N = 231) = 2.110$, *Cramer's V* = .096, $p > .05$).

Lastly, for the fictional genre, the results reveal significant differences between the various moral natures in the committing of a transgression of the law ($\chi^2 (2, N = 348) = 108.648$, *Cramer's V* = .559, $p < .001$), and social transgressions ($\chi^2 (2, N = 356) = 16.645$, *Cramer's V* = .216, $p < .001$). In line with the overall pattern, the results for the fiction showcased an overrepresentation of morally bad characters who commit transgressions of the law (adjusted residual = 10.4, $p < .001$), and morally ambivalent characters who commit a social transgression (adjusted residual = 3.9, $p < .001$). With regard to professional transgressions committed in the fictional genre, unlike the results reported for both the news and information and the entertainment genre, there were no significant differences between the different moral natures in committing them ($\chi^2 (2, N = 373) = 4.728$, *Cramer's V* = .113, $p > .05$).

For the characters that committed transgressions, there was the possibility that that transgression would be followed by consequences. As can be seen in Table 6, overall the results revealed significant differences between persons and characters of various moral natures and the consequences they faced for their transgressions ($\chi^2 (6, N = 720) = 13.438$, *Cramer's V* = .097, $p < .05$). Overall, of all the transgressors 64.7% was punished, 27.1% faced no consequences, 3.1% were rewarded, and 5.1% faced ambivalent consequences.

Overall, the adjusted standardized residuals reveal an overrepresentation of no consequences for ambivalent persons and characters (adjusted residual = 2.5, $p < .05$) that had committed a transgression as well as bad persons and characters that were punished for their transgressions (adjusted residual = 3.5, $p < .05$). The results for the genres news and information and entertainment indicated no significant differences between the consequences persons and characters of various moral natures faced for their transgressions. The cast of fiction, however, did reveal significant differences in the consequences of transgressions ($\chi^2 (6, N = 365) = 17.402$, $p < .01$). Similar to the overall pattern, the fictional cast has a significant overrepresentation of ambivalent persons and characters (adjusted residual = 2.6, $p < .01$) that had committed a transgression and faced no consequences as well as bad persons and characters that were punished for their transgressions (adjusted residual = 4.0, $p < .01$).

Table 6 Combined overview of genre-differences in association of moral nature and consequences

	News and Information ^a				Entertainment ^b				Fiction ^c				Total ^d			
	NC	PU	RE	AM	NC	PU	RE	AM	NC	PU	RE	AM	NC	PU	RE	AM
Good	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	Good	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.9	0.0
Bad	7.1	6.8	0.0	0.0	5.3	7.8	0.0	11.8	Bad	7.6	21.5*	0.0	0.0	6.7	14.4*	0.0
Ambivalent	92.9	91.5	0.0	100	94.7	91.6	100	88.2	Ambivalent	91.4*	77.6	100	100	92.8*	84.8	100
n	14	59	0	2	76	179	8	17	n	105	228	14	18	195	466	22

Note. NC: No consequences, PU: punished, RE: Rewarded, AM: Ambivalent consequences

^a $\chi^2 (4, N = 75) = 0.427, p = n.s.$; ^b $\chi^2 (6, N = 280) = 2.274, p = n.s.$; ^c $\chi^2 (6, N = 365) = 17.402, p < 0.01$;

^d $\chi^2 (6, N = 720) = 13.438, p < 0.05$

* Frequency significantly exceeded expectations by adjusted standardized residuals

7.5 Discussion

The goal of the current study was to shed light on the possible genre specific differences in the representation of moral nature in prime time programming. Following a recent trend in cultivation research that argued that specific genres might cultivate specific moral messages for viewers (cf. Bilandzic & Rössler, 2004), a distinction was made between the genre-cluster: news and information, entertainment and fiction and the moral content and moral casting of these genres were compared and contrasted.

The distribution of moral natures differed significantly between genres, most striking were the predominance of neutral characters in news and information and entertainment programming as well as the much more moral diverse cast and dominance of ambivalent characters in fiction. These results might be explained by the ambitions that the different genres have: News and information as a genre strives to inform its viewers in an unbiased manner which might translate into moral neutrality for most of the persons it presents, while fictional programming might use the ambivalent characters as fuel for the nowadays increasingly complex plots (Baym, 2000; Mittel, 2006).

When reflecting on these result from a moral growth-perspective, the diverse cast of television and especially fiction, might be argued to prompt moral reflection, moral deliberation and thereby moral growth in viewers. Turiel (1983) once called viewers “moral scientists” who construct and simulate social experience in order to develop their ideas about right and wrong. The diverse

moral casting might - though mechanisms such as narrative transportation, identification, empathy and temporary expansion of the self (Eden, Daalmans, & Johnson, 2015; Lewis, Tamborini, & Weber, 2014; Shedlosky-Shoemaker, Costabile, & Arkin, 2014; Slater, Johnson, Cohen, Comello, & Ewoldsen, 2014)- function as a *moral laboratory* or *moral playground* (Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004). In this *moral laboratory* viewers are prompted by figures and characters virtuous and not so virtuous behavior to explore and reflect upon moral issues and deliberate without facing the consequences of their moral decisions (Krijnen, 2007). Mar and Oatley (2008) also argued that interacting with narrative content – whether fictional or not - encourages empathetic growth and the transmission of (ethical) knowledge about the social world through the vicarious experience.

Aside from the possibility of the diverse moral casting prompting moral deliberation and reflections during viewing as a leisure activity, previous research has also argued that MACs challenge perceptions of right and wrong in various private, professional and societal contexts (Van Ommen, Daalmans, & Weijers, 2014; Weaver, Salamonson, Koch & Porter, 2012; Weaver & Wilson, 2011). Therefore programs featuring MACs might also prove to be a useful tool in ethics education to introduce and discuss ethical dilemmas in an accessible way.

With regard to the gendered differences between moral natures, the results revealed a predominant (proportional) association of women with good and ambivalent moral natures in the entertainment and fictional programming. These results are in line with the gendered differences reported for fiction (Daalmans, Hijmans, & Wester, 2013). Furthermore, the results also indicate an

association of men with moral neutrality overall, and in entertainment and news and information programming. This might be seen as in line with, male moral authority also reported in previous studies (Gerbner, 1995; Ross, 2007), thereby maintaining stereotyped gender roles and attributions of (moral) worth and power in the social world (cf. Eagly & Steffen, 1984).

Age differences between the genres indicated that overall adulthood was associated with moral ambivalence in fiction and entertainment and moral badness in fiction, while moral neutrality was the dominant category for all ages except in fiction. With regard to ethnicity, striking differences were found when comparing the genres. Both the news and information and the entertainment genre featured overrepresentations of Arabic in the morally bad category, while entertainment also showcased white moral neutrality and black badness and ambivalence. These results are largely in line with the results reported by for example Chiricos and Eschholz (2002), and Mastro and Greenberg (2000), who indicated that ethnic minorities are more often than white Caucasians are associated with criminality and thus assigned the role of perpetrator or villain. Surprisingly, fiction showed an overrepresentation of white Caucasian ambivalence. White Caucasian ambivalence (for example, Walter White in *Breaking Bad*, and Don Draper in *Mad Men*) is a phenomenon that is also noticed by television critics (Wayne, 2014). For example, Todd van der Werff (2013) argued that the popularity of white morally ambivalent characters should be seen as: “a movement dominated by singular white men, whose combination of ruthlessness, inherently sympathetic nature and sexual charisma has led them to deeper and darker things”. All in all, the messages of moral categorization in different genres reveal strikingly different “color-palettes”, which might be problematic for the limited and damaging views people with distinct genre-preferences could cultivate about different ethnic groups (cf. Gerbner, 1995).

Rather unsurprisingly, in all genres bad and ambivalent characters were dominant in the committing of transgressions. Overall, and in all genres morally bad characters are typed by their association with transgressions of the law, while morally ambivalent characters were tied to the “less severe” professional and social transgressions. Furthermore, two-thirds of all transgressions are punished, and whereas all morally bad lawbreakers were always punished, ambivalent characters who commit mostly professional and social transgression sometimes do go unpunished. Furthermore, punishment for the transgressions of bad characters was proportionally much more frequent in fiction than in any of the other genres. These results thereby reveal a more straightforward moral lesson in fiction than in news and information or entertainment. Lawbreakers and criminals are punished, which reinforces (and simultaneously cultivates) viewers’ desire for a belief in a just world (Shrum, 1999). Television ritualizes

transgressive events – particularly transgressions of the law – and their punishment with functional implications for the maintenance of social order. From a functionalist (*Durkheimian*) perspective, television clearly reproduces guidelines of acceptable and unacceptable (ethical) behavior in society, through the unambiguous punishment of unlawful behavior (Krijnen, 2007; Grabe, 2002). Simultaneously, the somewhat less strict enforcement of punishment for professional and social transgressions suggests that MACs potentially offer motives and insight into the moral reasoning behind their transgressions therefore making some transgressions acceptable (Konijn & Hoorn, 2005). Thus, the fears concerning viewers’ moral judgments becoming more relaxed as a result of seeing moral ambivalence and moral relativism can be tempered.

As with all studies, this study was not without limitations, which open up interesting avenues for further research. The choice to code only the main storyline for fiction, resulted in differing of the subsample sets. And while the comparisons in the study were based on relative proportions, a more complete picture of television’s public moral discourse would have been created by coding all fictional storylines.

Even though our sample was very diverse in genres, it is also characterized to a large degree by news and information programming that was of Dutch origin, while the entertainment and fiction programming was to a large degree of American or other Anglo-Saxon origin. One might expect national differences between and within the genres if it contains a large degree of foreign made programs, since “every country’s television system reflects the historical, political, social, economic, and cultural contexts within which it has developed” (Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, & Signorielli, 1978, p. 178). However, Dutch broadcasters may simply select American programs that resemble Dutch productions; after all, media organizations want a large audience and will arguably choose programs in line with what they see as the Dutch audience conceptualization of public morality.

Despite its limitation, the presented explorative study of genre differences in moral content in television programs provides a first empirical base for further research into differences between and in genres regarding the representation of moral natures. More research is still needed to fully flesh out the differences regarding the representation of moral natures within the larger genre clusters, and the potential implications these genre differences in the representation of morality might have for viewers at large as well as viewers with distinct genre preferences that are enabled by technological changes in the media landscape (DVR, TiVo). And due to the fact that television and its stories continue to form an important aspect in viewers (un)conscious moral education (Bandura, 1977; Gerbner, 1995), and its impact on viewers moral constitutions will continue to be

questioned and debated, continued explorations of televisions moral content will remain vital to balance the disputes ahead about the relationship between television and morality in our society.

8

CHAPTER

Summary, conclusion and discussion

8.1 Introduction

This dissertation started from the discrepancies between the public debate and academic studies about the relationship between television and morality. The first assumed, quite plainly, that television was bad for us. Television content supposedly lead to the degradation of an individual's moral compass and the moral degradation of society at large (Biltereyst, 2004; Dant, 2012; Krijnen, 2007). On the other hand, the results of previous academic research on television and its moral content did not affirm television's supposed negative moral value. They concluded that: television represents a large range of positive personal values as well as different types of morality, television "associates goodness and positive values with the state, power, and recognized authority" (Selnow, 1990, p.72). Television messages reinforce the idea of the family as the cornerstone of society, and it seems "to promote 'functional behaviour' instead of 'dysfunctional behaviour'" (Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2005, p.370). Nevertheless, the debate on the relationship between television and morality ties in with a long-standing line of reasoning within the communication science tradition, since they predominantly focus on the negative and harmful effects television representation of "immoral" topics (i.e. sex and violence) might have on viewers (Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2013; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). The newest additions to the morality and television debate were concerns about the rise of morally ambivalent television programs and morally ambivalent characters (MACs) (e.g. Barbier, 2014; Fulford, 2014; Polatis, 2014; Tavener, 2000).

Our perspective on the role of television and the reproduction of the moral order lies within the cultural tradition and cohesion perspective of communication science (Baran & Davis, 2005; McQuail, 2000). Media function as a mirror and sounding board of what is happening in society and what is seen as valuable and important. Simultaneously the media also function as a forum in which current events and shifts in society might be discussed and reflected upon. This might be through the 'moral of a television story', as described by Gerbner (1969), but also in the mirroring and highlighting topics of importance. Within this tradition television is seen as an essentially conservative message system, which protects society from ideological uncertainties as a result of societal problems or other disruptions of the status quo.

In this dissertation, focused on the relationship between television and morality, television is seen as society's most prevalent storyteller. This storyteller is seen as a conservative, uniform message system, whose content continuously and repeatedly illuminates the hidden dynamics of the world, how things work, how we should judge things in life and what value they have (good, bad). In other words, television tells us "about life, people, places, striving, power, fate and

family life. It presents the good and the bad, the happy and sad, the powerful and the weak, and lets us know who or what is a success or a failure” (Signorielli & Morgan, 2001, p.335). Next to the conceptualization of television as a uniform and conservative message system, we also include the perspective of television as a forum proposed by Newcomb and Hirsch (1983). They opt for the much broader perspective of television as a forum in which the messages of television are complex, as well as contradictory and confusing, similar to the culture it is reflective of. The television messages thus reflect the themes and discussions of a morally differentiated society, in the process of negotiating reality it presents diverse perspectives on the societal and moral order. As a result of this heterogeneous space, where multiple conflicting moral messages may exist side by side, television simultaneously maintains societal order and facilitates change.

When we then consult the research that has been conducted on television and morality, it quickly becomes clear that a large diversity of moral research topics have been explored. Nevertheless, the studies that were conducted on the moral content on television were either focused on a distinct genre (Grabe, 2002; Hastall, Bilandzic, & Sukalla, 2013; Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982), on a single moral category such as transgression, values or moral emotions (Potter & Ware, 1987; Selnow, 1986, 1990) or a relatively limited number of genres (Krijnen & Costera Meijer, 2007). What remained unclear was, what an analysis of the moral content of television as a whole would offer. Based on our literature review, we concluded that previous research on television’s moral content mainly focused on specific genres with deductively predefined aspects of morality, like norm violations and anti-social behavior. This then resulted in a fragmented vision of what the representation of morality entails on television, due to a lack of a clear conceptualization. This led us to explore television’s prime time content, to create a comprehensive picture of what everyday television broadcasts have to offer to its viewers as a broad audience when it comes to morality. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the representation of morality in prime time television and answer the overarching research question: *How is morality represented on Dutch prime time television?*, and does so by exploring three global research questions:

- a. Which types of morality are present on Dutch prime time television?
- b. Which similarities and differences in the representation of morality are there between television genres?
- c. Are there changes in the representation of morality over time?

To answer this question this dissertation is based on cumulative explorations, which qualitatively and quantitatively seek to provide answers to the general research question proposed. In this final chapter we summarize our findings,

report our overarching conclusions, formulate limitations of the studies and provide directions for future research.

8.2 Summary of research and findings

In the first study in this dissertation (Chapter 2), we set out to explore and describe the types of morality and moral content in one (constructed) night of Dutch prime time television with an open and inductive approach through a qualitative content analysis. We started our exploration with morality as sensitizing concept based on theoretical literature that could include variations of formal, informal and intuitive morality (Haidt, 2001; Verplaetse, 2008; WRR, 2003). The first study examined a constructed night of prime time television consisting of twenty-four programs. Our results revealed 13 types of morality: four specifications of formal morality (*judicial morality*, *economic morality*, *professional morality* and *political morality*), two types of morality that combine aspects from formal and informal type of morality (*consumer morality* and *morality of care*), four specifications of the informal type of morality (*civil morality*, *morality of knowledge*, *game morality* and *iconic morality*), and three types of intuitive morality (*morality of social bonding*, *morality of cooperation*, and *morality of violence*). Our results also illustrated a basic differentiation between morals that react on violations and transgressions and thereby focus on restricting behavior, and morals that are focused on ideals and values and stimulate behavior (in line with WRR, 2003). Lastly, we differentiated three moral meta-themes that permeate all genres, as well as six moral themes that arose only in specific genre-clusters. The moral meta-themes that permeated all genres: *The family is the cornerstone of society*, *Safety, order and justice form the basis of a structured and well-functioning society*, and *Health is wealth*.

Each genre also revealed a moral discourse in which genre-specific nuances were outlined. News and information as a genre-cluster for example articulated two specific recurring moral themes: *Honor should be cherished and defended*, *Informed citizenship is the key to democracy*. The results for the entertainment and reality genre-cluster revealed three recurring moral themes: *Consumption leads to the good life*, *Kindness, solidarity and civility are the glue that holds society together*, and *You should play by the rules of the game*. And lastly fiction revealed one recurring genre-specific moral theme: *Friends form our chosen family*.

We concluded the first study by stating that television, in its many genres and program forms through this ritual repetition of moral meta-themes and types of morality, communicates what is most important in society. In this sense the moral meta-themes can be seen as the heart of the myths society tells itself about itself, or as Lule (2001) defined them the core of society’s “eternal stories.”

The overarching research goal of this dissertation was fully describing and analyzing morality in prime time television content. To reach that goal we had to develop coding instruments, to capture the variety and diversity in aspects of the concept of morality. In Chapter 3 we described the process which led to the creation of the coding instruments used in the studies reported in Chapter 4 through 7. Two processes were particularly important in this trajectory: the test case of coding television commercials and the theoretical exploration regarding morality as a central concept.

One of the results in the first study, in Chapter 2, revealed that morality is represented by capturing problems and violations as well as reflections on and condemnations of those behaviors and possible solutions. This we argued reflected the moral community in action. This distinction was also present in our test case which was focused on commercials. Next to a specific commercial message regarding the product or service, the representation of persons in the commercial added a layer of meaning in itself. Both layers of moral attention were then included in the coding instruments.

In our test case focused on commercials, we tried to describe the products and services in terms of the *Good Life* theme from the first qualitative study, particularly for the life domains which were prevalent. By trial and error we succeeded in defining eleven domain categories that allowed for categorizing 97% of the products or brands presented in the commercials (with high reliability), see Appendix I. Furthermore, because values are a more direct conceptualization of morality, we chose to inductively formulate value categories in a similar manner as we used in the first study. The result was very clear and reliably coded, but disappointing, the large majority of the commercials (over 75%) presented functionality as its main value. We therefore concluded that we had succeeded in capturing values in a reliable manner, but had failed in assessing deeper lying societal values in this content. Functionality had become a sort of cloaking value, which was ever-present in almost all commercials but was as a value-category useless for other television formats such as the news. This result formed the impetus for a phase of reflection in which we theoretically and methodologically redefined our perspective on morality.

One of the conclusions of the first qualitative study of morality on prime time television was that the initial categorization of morality in formal, informal and intuitive was not effective. We found several types of morality that blurred the boundaries between the main categories (formal, informal and intuitive), and the expectations regarding the intuitive moralities did not truly pan out. This lead us to explore a more abstract approach to morality, which would nevertheless capture the moral diversity we found in study one and would connect morality to societal institutions. Inspired by a report of the Dutch

Scientific Council on values, norms and behavior (WRR, 2003), we started to work with Tipton's styles of moral evaluation (2002). His styles of moral evaluation are inherently tied to specific social institutions and social behavioral practices. Based on Tipton's work we formulated four types of morality: Authoritative, Regulative, Market and Expressive morality. These types of morality were then included in the coding instruments used in the studies reported in Chapters 4 and 6.

Based on the results of the first study, we further operationalized the concept of morality in other aspects besides the four morality types. We incorporated differentiations in Moral Theme, in Moral Domain and in Moral Complexity on the level of moral content, and on the level of moral casting and behavior we included differentiations in Moral Nature, Transgressions and Consequences. The thereby developed perspective on the representation of the various aspects of morality is applied in the studies reported in Chapters 4 through 7. The first of those studies explored changes in the representation of morality and moral complexity in television fiction over the last 25 years, whereas the last study in this dissertation explored possible genre differences in the representation of morality.

In the second study (Chapter 4 and 5), we built on the results from the first study by choosing to move forward with a focus on moral pluralism connected to societal institutions. In part because study one revealed the importance of differing moral communities in the judgment and praise of individual behavior, but also due the implication that types of moralities might therefore be strongly tied to institutional contexts. Furthermore, if television can be seen as a purveyor of society's core values, and of its moralities, changes in society over time due to continuous structural societal changes such as individualization, institutionalization and secularization, might have consequences for television's reflection thereof (Den Hoed & Schuyt, 2004; Tipton, 2002; Zijderveld, 2000). Which begs the question if television's representation of morality in television fiction, as an echo of societal norms and values, has also changed over time.

The results of the study of morality in fiction over time, revealed that on the level of moral content (Chapter 4) the most dominant themes overall were 1) *Order, safety and justice as a problem of organized society* (35%), 2) *Love and romance as a problem of individual expression* (34%), and 3) *Marriage and extended family as problems of kinship and identity* (24%). Furthermore, over time especially the patterns of change were rather erratic, although the increase of Problems and issues relating to freedom and individual expression over time is noteworthy (from 10 to 25%). The results with regard to themes was also mirrored in moral domains, where overall and over time Family (35%), Law, order and justice (25%) and Leisure, romance and friendship (20%) were found to be the most prevalent.

The moral community that formed the backdrop of moral authority most of the time was the Familial and unchosen (traditional) community, representing the importance of society at large in the execution of social control and social cohesion in the fictional world. The most prevalent type of morality in fiction overall and over time was the expressive morality, which is in line with the found prevalence of the theme of Individual expression. Lastly, the results revealed that over time more stories told in fiction had become morally complex.

On the level of *moral casting* (Chapter 5) the results surprisingly revealed the prevalence of morally ambivalent characters overall and an increase of this dominance over time. Furthermore, the results revealed that morally bad characters could be typed by their association with transgressions of the law, while morally ambivalent characters are predominantly associated with social transgressions (i.e. lying, vulgar behavior, and cheating). The majority of all types of transgressions were punished, regardless of the moral nature of the perpetrator, thereby communicating the moral lesson that transgressions are not tolerated. Furthermore, the results revealed an association of women with moral goodness, males with moral badness and gender neutrality for moral ambivalence. Age was revealed as a demographic category that was not that distinctive when combined with moral nature, aside from the predominant association of moral badness with adulthood. And lastly, the results for country of origin revealed that American and Dutch prime time drama are very similar in their moral casting, and other foreign drama reveals a more erratic pattern in moral casting.

In the third and final study of this dissertation (Chapter 6 and 7), we built on the first two studies and expanded the scope toward the quantitative analysis of morality in the various genres of prime time content. In this study we combined the idea of multiples moralities connected with institutionalized spheres (cf. Tipton, 2002), as well as the exploration of morality in content and casting, with a focus on possible genre-specific cultivation perspective. Following the idea put forth by Hawkins and Pingree (1981), the assumption that different TV genres may cultivate different views of the world, informed the overarching question which was explored in the third study of this dissertation, namely: Are there genre-differences in the representation of morality?

The results on the level of *moral content* (Chapter 6) revealed distinct genre-differences in the presence of moral themes. Themes related to Organized society (e.g. order and safety and health) were the most prevalent in all genres (35-54%), and most prominently present in the news and information genre. We also found distinct genre differences: for the entertainment genre, Market relations (23%) were significantly overrepresented as a theme compared to the other genres, indicating the dominance of themes related to games, wealth and winning. And for both entertainment and fiction genre the results indicated an overrepresentation

of themes connected to Freedom and individual expression (22% and 29%), illustrating the predominance of themes belonging to the private domain. And while the themes related to Kinship and identity were proportionally much less dominant in entertainment and news and information genres, for fiction this theme was predominant in a third of the storylines.

When considering the domains that are dominant per genre, we found distinct differences in that Politics (24%) was the most prominent in the news and information genre, Culture, art and media (35%) in the entertainment genre and Family (37%) in the fictional genre. In all genres, the Traditional community (69-92%) (i.e. that is society at large) was the dominant community that showed or was responsible for the rejection or approval of behavior. Furthermore, interestingly the analysis showed that a third of all the items in the news and information genre and one fifth of the items in the entertainment genre contained no morality (i.e. was purely factual information such as the weather), while in fiction all storylines contained some type of morality. In both fiction (71%) and entertainment (52%) the expressive type of morality was the most prevalent, while in news and information the regulative morality (57%) predominated its content. And lastly, considering the degree of moral complexity, more than two third of the items in news and information and entertainment genre were not morally complex, while for fiction this was only a rough third of the storylines. This then would indicate a larger degree of complexity in television fiction than the other genres.

With regard to *moral casting and conduct* (Chapter 7), the results show that MACs (morally ambivalent characters) dominate the cast of fiction (50%), while neutral characters form a majority in news and information (86%) as well as entertainment programming (58%). With regard to the gendered differences between moral natures, the results revealed a predominant (proportional) association of women with good and ambivalent moral natures in the entertainment and fictional programming. In all genres MACs are (predominantly) typed by social and professional transgression, while morally bad characters are typed by transgressions of the law. Furthermore, while two-thirds of all transgressions are punished, morally bad characters are always punished while MACs more often get away without consequences. Nevertheless, through the consistent punishment of morally bad persons – who more often than other persons commit transgressions of the law – the moral message regarding transgressive behavior on television can be seen as morally strict concerning morally heinous transgressive behavior. Regarding gender, the results indicate an association of men with moral neutrality in entertainment and news and information programming. Age differences between the genres indicated that overall adulthood was associated with moral ambivalence in fiction and entertainment

and moral badness in fiction, while moral neutrality was the dominant category for all ages in both the entertainment genre and the news and information genre. With regard to ethnicity, striking differences were found when comparing the genres. News and information as a genre mainly showcases neutral persons of all ethnicities (82-91%), entertainment showcased white moral neutrality and black badness and ambivalence. In fiction moral ambivalence is mostly associated with Caucasian (49%) and black characters (43%).

8.3 Conclusion and Discussion

The goal of this dissertation was to describe how morality was represented on Dutch prime time television. To reach this goal to reconstruct the nature and types of morality, we conducted three exploratory studies focused on describing and analyzing the representations of morality in different genres and over time. These studies have resulted in a cumulative process of comparison, discovery and reflection, which lead to an encompassing image of what morality on television looks like empirically. The moral core of television, which is present in all televisions genres, exists in questions of organized society: Justice, Order and Safety. This moral core of the message system is a real phenomenon in all three studies, and has also been presented in previous research by others (*for example* Costera Meijer & Krijnen, 2005; Selnow, 1986, 1990). Morality also differs between genres, and is also not present in all television items. The news for example, frequently presents facts without a moral message, while in fiction morality is always present.

The four different types of morality are diversely distributed over the different genres, and when considered from a distance, the Regulative morality is the dominant morality which is continuously contested and contrasted with the other morality types. In fiction it might be contrasted with the Expressive morality type, while in entertainment it might be discussed side-by-side with the Market morality. Morality in television content is complex in the sense that, different types of morality might be presented side-by-side or might be presented as conflicting discourses on a problem. Furthermore, this complexity is also captured in the palette of moral messages of themes and domains of importance as well as transgressions of commonly held norms and values which deserve punishment. As a result there is not one universal moral message that resonates within the message system as a whole, but a continuous discussion and reflection on moralities and subsequent moral evaluations of conduct. Prime time television with its diversity of moral themes and moral domains functions as a moral platform for reflection in which a culture is in discussion with itself.

In the first qualitative study (Chapter 2) we concluded that the focus of morality in news and fiction is complementary, and can be seen as two sides of the same coin, when considering the role of the individual and the community. In the news-cluster the focus is on problems and current affairs in the public sphere, while fiction's morality dramatizes the inner world of fictionalized private persons in the various personal and professional communities. We now know that this conclusion was somewhat premature, since news and fiction do not continuously communicate the same moral message. Each genre generally has its own focus, and news and fiction might actually be proponents of opposite messages: freedom, self-realization and self-expression in fiction are contrasted with ordered society, tradition and authority in news and information. As a result different discourses on what is seen as important, valuable and good are communicated through the prominence of differing types of morality within the forum of television and communicates the different moral appeals that are made to the individual in a plural society. If this always leads to conflicts of interest remains to be seen, since we found substantially less moral dilemmas and conflicts than previously expected. One might argue that over the course of life modern individuals become familiar with the moralities tied to differing institutions and come to the realization that these actually co-exist in everyday life, and that this process is also reflected in television content. Furthermore, within one type of morality one can argue for different perspectives, according to Tipton (2002). For example, within the familial context, babies are protected, toddlers are regulated and teenagers are engaged in debate. And within the educational system, several perspectives can be taken within the regulative style of moral evaluation. On the one, hand pupils are prepared to be citizens in a democratic society based on principles of equality, while on the other hand the system employs a meritocratic principle which is based in inequality as principle. From this vantage-point the moral complexity a viewer encounters on television, is a carbon copy of the moral complexity encountered in daily life.

Morality is a fundamentally layered phenomenon and we approached it as such in all our studies. "Living morality" through which persons and characters think and act are structurally and ideologically mixed (Tipton, 2002, p. 39). We captured this partly in the reconstruction of both ever present and changing moral themes in different genres. As such television cultivates moral problems which play a prominent role in specific institutions in ordered society. The most prominent problems and issues encountered are family and safety. These themes, that are genre-crossing resonate with what people have indicated to be important to them (e.g. Brandsma, 2007; European Values Study, 2011; Harding, Phillips, & Fogarty, 1986; Kooiker, 1995) and as such television is a relatively coherent message system, which fulfills the ritualistic function of echoing what we as a

society value most. Based on these findings we would also argue that in a world where genre-preferences and niche-proliferation have become central to how we watch television, it seems that viewers cannot escape its omnipresent moral core (i.e. dominant genre-crossing moral (meta-)themes and domains).

The second level of moral messages in prime time television concentrated on moral casting and human conduct in terms of transgressions of norms and values discussed in the news, entertainment or fictional genre. Overall, we can argue that of all the transgressions two-thirds are punished and that transgressive behavior by morally bad persons is almost always punished. Morally ambivalent persons and characters (who mostly commit social transgressions), sometimes get away without punishment. We can also conclude that the Dutch television landscape hosts a gross overrepresentation of men, adults and Caucasians and therefore significant underrepresentation of women, children and the elderly and persons of color. These findings on moral casting are in line with decades of research concerning the television demography, for both the Dutch television landscape and others internationally (*for example*, Emons, 2011; Gerbner, 1995; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Pennekamp, 2011; Segijn et al., 2014; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999).

Our results therefore form a reaffirmation of the idea that television is (still) a reflection of society's hegemonic power structure (Fiske, 1987; Gitlin, 1987; Holtzman, 2000). All in all, we can conclude that television communicates who is of *moral worth* and what the moral hierarchy of personhood entails through mechanisms of over- and underrepresentation as well as symbolically through associations with mostly thoroughly stereotypical associations of moral nature.

Finally, contrary to public assumptions about television stimulating moral degradation, we believe that prime time television content cultivates the importance of a few commonly held norms and values and reinforces the basic principle that transgressions should be punished. The forum character of television is also present we believe, in the pluriformity of moral themes, moral complexity and prominence of varying types of morality between genres and within programs. Nevertheless, a stocktaking of the moral community who judges behavior in prime time programming reveals the predominance of society at large (traditional community), thereby once more cementing the conclusion that television is also partly a uniform and conservative message system.

This then leads us to the fundamental theoretical question that underlies this dissertation. In terms of Durkheim (1995) we can argue that the relatively stable moral core of television's message system represents what we share with one another. These are the '*représentations collectives*' discussed in Chapter 1, which form the representation of collectively held experiences in society as a binding force which was once beholden to religion. According to our explorations,

at least part of the collective world we inhabit is reaffirmed by continuous representation and repetition of its importance. We might argue that herein television has taken over some of the symbolic power once reserved for religion. The medium has the potential, in terms of Durkheim (1933), to represent to a large audience the internally carried obligation of the *conscience collective*. Nevertheless this message is not without contradiction, as it is not the only moral message television represents, which becomes clear in television's forum character.

This forum character refers to the individualization in modern society, and what is presented of this phenomenon on television. Two of the defined types of morality in this study are closely tied to the American cultural tradition of individualism. The expressive morality and the market morality are respectively based on the notions of 'romantic individualism' and 'utilitarian individualism' (Tipton, 2002). Tipton conceptualizes these as contradictory with the obligations the individual has towards the community, suggesting that these might be mutually exclusive. In our results the prominence of the Expressive morality as well as the theme of *Friends form our chosen family* are indicative of individualization, through its focus on looser ties and a prominence of individual choice over obligations. The predominance of romance, friendship, leisure and experiences puts the individual at the center of the moral landscape, which then combined with other results, sparks the question if the presence of several moralities leads to internal conflicts for the individual (or moral ambivalence). We find that in around ten percent of the studied content a conflict arises between moralities, while in around twenty percent of the studied content different moralities are presented side-by-side. Within the fictional genre this degree of complexity is much larger than in the other two genres, which makes fiction a particularly interesting genre for future research certainly when combined with the finding that this genre also showcases the most morally ambivalent characters. Perhaps this genre, functions as the arena where this moral conflict and this complexity is presented and resolved.

However, it would be wrong to assume that television is the only morally laden genre. The other genres also contribute a substantial part of the moral messages of television. The moral messages of Dutch prime time television are layered and represent a dual perspective: tradition and the individual are placed side-by-side in a plural world. This double perspective largely reflects what the SCP concluded in 2004 about Dutch society at in the report entitled "Individualization and social integration", individualism in the Netherlands lacks a focus on competition and assertiveness, compared to the United States. In terms of cultural traits Hofstede typed the Netherlands as a feminine country, which has a strong focus on mutual care, responsibility, solidarity and loyalty. Individualism

in the Netherlands, similar to the Scandinavian countries, can easily coexist with a strong collective orientation (Schnabel, 2004c, p. 21). Another SCP report (Schnabel 2004b, p. 11) once again reaffirms that the Dutch prefer a society with a large degree of solidarity and a strong sense of community. When reflecting on the findings of these reports, we can state that the results in this dissertation reaffirm that television actually reflects and communicates what Dutch society values.

8.4 Methodological reflection, limitations and directions for future research

The research goal of this dissertation was to fully grasp the ways in which morality is represented in television programs. To do so, we used an explorative strategy in which we used the content of television programs to flesh out the concept of morality conceptually and methodologically in an inductive manner. The first qualitative study of one night of prime time revealed that different television programs represented messages of different moral content for specific moral contexts (i.e. institutions) and that some programs are built on conflicting different types of morality. The preliminary broad distinction in formal, informal and intuitive types of morality yielded a large palette of different (sub)types of morality, many of which crossed the boundaries between the three overarching morality types. We therefore believed that when moving forward in the project to quantitatively describe and analyze differentiation in morality on television, realistically and practically these types of morality were too complex and entwined to use when coding a large sample of materials with multiple coders. Taken together, the first study was an empirical affirmation of the idea of moral pluriformity and the importance of institutional contexts as beacons of moral judgments, this then informed the decision to include Tipton's (2002) ethical styles of evaluation for our further explorations.

This then lead to a new step in creating a coding instrument which would incorporate Tipton's styles of moral evaluation, and describe how and to which extent these styles are present in television content. In terms of Krippendorff (1980, p.35) our objective asks for content analysis according to a system model, which establishes general patterns as well as differences between subsystems. The challenge here was to create an instrument that would reliably and validly capture these styles of moral evaluation in programs of differing formats by a large group of coders. The problem here is mostly content-related, because when several styles of moral evaluation are simultaneously present in television stories it becomes increasingly complex and as a consequence coders can more easily

make differing choices. Validity and reliability of the coding instrument are thereby thoroughly entwined; by establishing strict procedures coders should be guided to reliably capture the complexity present in the material (cf. Krippendorff, 2004: p. 211-214). By extensively training the coders, by means of observation, practice, discussion and reflection, they were successful in capturing the complex differentiation of types of morality in the material. Simultaneously, by means of trial and error we established a procedure for coding the different morality aspects in varying television contents (see Appendix II and III). The instructions to code programs were tailored to each genre (i.e. news and information, entertainment and fiction), and then extensively tested in training sessions. Due to these extensive instructions in the instruments as well as training sessions with the coders, we succeeded in capturing the different morality aspects with a high degree of reliability. This then enables us to build our conclusion stating that moral diversity is a central component of the content of television and state that one fifth of the programs in general showcase moral complexity and television fiction even presents a discussion between types of morality in two thirds of its content. This then leads to a new trajectory for research, since we know very little about how this interaction of differing types of morality actually unfolds within the television programs. We can trace which type's conflict, but we have no insight into how this conflict arises or how it ends. Future research should endeavor to analyze how these different types of morality specifically interact. It might be that different persons or characters are the propagators of conflicting morality types, and that by analyzing the transgressions, punishments and rewards the resolution to the conflict can be described. However, other morality aspects might also play a role.

The second limitation of the quantitative explorations of morality in this dissertation was the choice to code only the main storyline for fiction, while in the third study we chose to code up to 10 items for news and information as well as the entertainment genre, resulting in differing of the subsample sets. The choice to code only the main storyline in the fictional programs was a result of the understanding that the main storyline would communicate the most important moral information (themes, domains, types of morality), and that the subplots in other storylines would essentially mimic or parallel the important aspects and therefore not necessarily add new insights into the representation of morality within the genre (Weijers, 2014; Wester & Weijers, 2006). Nevertheless, while the comparisons in the study were based on relative proportions, a more complete picture of television's public moral discourse would have been created by coding all fictional storylines per fiction program. The results however, do show that more main fictional storylines are already more morally complex than items in either news and information or entertainment programming indicating

that subplots might only replicate the presented picture. Nevertheless, a suggestion for future research, even though it will result in an even more time consuming period of data collection, would be to include the complete content of all programs (i.e. all storylines and all items) regardless of the genre. This suggestion to include all content of all programs regardless of the genre, would further strengthen the validity of the outcomes.

Furthermore, future research might also endeavor to explore in what ways aspects of moral content and moral casting are associated. In other words, how are the characters with various moral natures distributed over moral themes and domains and what types of moral reasoning (morality types) are associated with characters of various moral natures? This would further illustrate how morality is represented, how complexity is further enacted and what is articulated as morally important in society and who communicates the moral importance of that topic.

Lastly, we feel that future research should work on a more detailed conceptualization of moral nature. In this dissertation moral nature was conceptualized and coded as a concept with four possible varieties: morally good, morally bad, morally ambivalent and morally neutral (only in the last study). The reality of moral personhood on television, as we found out during our testing of the codebook, is invariable much more complex than we capture with this operationalization. Since morally ambivalent persons and characters on television extend from Dr. House the brilliant, irreverent, pill popping doctor who almost always gets positive results, Walter White a meth-cooking former science teacher, mob boss Tony Soprano and Dexter the serial killer who kills killers, the categorization is in retrospect too broadly defined. This difficulty is also outlined by other researchers studying MACs (Eden, Daalmans, & Johnson, 2016; Eden, Oliver, Tamborini, Limperos & Woolley, 2015; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012; Shafer & Raney, 2012), arguing that there is a vast difference between MACs and that these differences might be tied to the severity and heinousness of their transgressions, or the variety of motivations they have for their morally ambivalent behavior or even the outcomes their behavior creates. A review of the literature revealed that literary scholars have termed this type of character “ambiguous”, while communication scholars and media psychologists have previously preferred terms such as neutral, inconsistent, or fascinating for these characters exhibiting both good and bad traits and/or behavior (Krakowiak, 2015; Tamborini et al., 2010). Currently, both anti-heroes (Donnelly, 2012; Janicke & Raney, 2015; Shafer & Raney, 2012) and morally ambiguous characters (Eden et al., 2011; Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012; Krakowiak & Tsay, 2011; Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2013; Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2015) are terms that show a considerable overlap in definition and are often used interchangeably for characters that exhibit both good and bad

behavior. Morally ambiguous characters are said to “do both good and bad things” (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012, p.117) and “often behave in immoral ways” which are often alleviated by redeeming qualities that set them apart from villains (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2015). The ambiguities in defining moral character descriptions are well-documented. Nevertheless, in retrospect the conceptualization of moral personhood into merely good, ambivalent, bad and neutral seems to fall short in capturing the moral complexity that we found coupled with the prevalence of moral ambivalent personhood in this dissertation. Recently, in an effort towards conceptualizing moral nature of persons Sanders and Tsay-Vogel (2015) proposed a continuum and rated characters from the *Harry Potter* series accordingly. They proposed a continuum, with on each outer end either the archetypal hero or archetypal villain, this continuum extends from the most moral character, to a somewhat moral character, to a morally ambiguous character, to a somewhat immoral character, to the most immoral character. This is one of the first efforts to more clearly define what is meant by moral ambivalence, since it contains a host of characters who commit a variety of differing transgressive acts for a plethora of different and more or less valid reasons who receive a varying amount of punishment or praise for that behavior. All in all, more research is needed to operationalize the nuances in moral ambivalence as well as describe their presence in the television landscape. Future research could endeavor to use qualitative content analysis to map and differentiate various types of morally ambivalence, by perhaps creating a typology that categorizes the moral nature of characters taking into consideration aspects that have proven important in the research in this dissertation as well as other previous research (e.g. nature of transgression, justification for transgressions, outcomes of the behavior and consequences for transgressions).

The overall conclusion of this dissertation indicates that television at large presents an elaborate picture of diverse moral issues and moral personhood from several moral perspectives and functions as a moral forum, while simultaneously propagating a distinct moral core in all its programming regardless of the genre. More research is still needed to fully flesh out the differences regarding the representation of morality on both the level of content and casting, within the larger genre clusters, and the potential implications for genre-specific moral cultivation these genre differences in the representation of morality might have. These studies should then consider both the audience at large as well as viewers with distinct genre preferences that are enabled by technological changes in the media landscape (i.e. streaming TV, on demand platforms like *Netflix*, DVR, binge-watching). And due to the fact that television and its stories continue to form an important aspect in viewers (un)conscious moral education

(Bandura, 2002; Gerbner, 1998a), and its impact on viewers moral constitutions will continue to be questioned and debated, continued explorations of televisions moral content will remain vital to balance the disputes ahead and foster the potential to look at the relationship between television and morality in our society from an inherently more positive vantage point. In other words, to move away from the associations of television with moral degradation, and see the potential of moral growth for viewers based on the morally rich content television as a storytelling forum provides.

References

- Abbott, A. (1983). Professional Ethics. *American Journal of Sociology*, 88 (5), 855-885.
- Abt, V., & Seesholtz, M. (1994). The Shameless World of Phil, Sally and Oprah: Television Talk Shows and the Deconstructing of Society. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 28(1), 171-191. doi:10.1111/j.0022-3840.1994.2801_171.x
- Adoni, H., Cohen, A. A., & Mane, S. (1984). Social reality and television news: Perceptual dimensions of social conflicts in selected life areas. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 28 (1), 33-49. doi: 10.1080/08838158409386513
- Allan, S. (1998). (En)gendering the truth politics of news discourse. In C. Carter, G. Branston, & S. Allan (Eds.), *News, gender and power* (pp. 121-140). London: Routledge.
- Arthurs, J. (2009). Brands, markets and charitable ethics: MTVs EXIT campaign. *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 6(2), 301-319.
- Askar, J.G. (2011). The rise of the anti-hero on TV and the impact it could have on kids. *Deseret News*. Retrieved from <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700208623/The-rise-of-the-anti-hero-on-TV-and-the-impact-it-could-have-on-kids.html?pg=all>
- Aupers, S., Houtman, D., & Van der Tak, I. (2003) Gewoon worden wie je bent [Just becoming who you are]. *Sociologische Gids*, 50(2), 203-222.
- Bailey, E., Tsay-Vogel, M., Krakowiak, K.M., & Ivory, J.D. (2013, June). *Effects of morally ambiguous character behavior on affective dispositions, character perceptions and enjoyment*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, London.
- Balkenende, J.P. (2003). Toespraak van de minister-president, mr. dr. J.P. Balkenende, congres *Normen op hun Waarde geschat* [Norms truly valued] van het Platform Waarden en Normen, Hardinxveld-Giessendam, Geraadpleegd op 23-11-2009, via http://www.minaz.nl/Actueel/Toespraken/2003/09/Toespraak_van_de_minister_president_mr_dr_J_P_Balkenende_congres_Normen_op_hun_Waarde_geschat_van_het_Platform_Waarden_en_Normen_Hardinxveld_Giessendam
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (2002). Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (2nd ed.) (pp.121-153). Mahwah, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Baran, S. J., & Davis, D. K. (2015). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment, and future* (7nd ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning
- Barbier, J. (2014, 12 April). Slecht is echt [Bad is real]. *De Volkskrant*, retrieved via <http://www.volkskrant.nl/dossier-archief/slecht-is-echt-a3633961/>
- Barker, C. (1999). *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities*. Buckingham/ Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Barrile, L. G. (1986). Television's "bogeyclass"?: Status, motives, and violence in crime drama characters. *Sociological Viewpoints*, 2, 39-56.
- Bartsch, R.A., Burnett, T., Diller, T.R., & Rankin-Williams, E. (2000). Gender Representation in Television Commercials: Updating an Update. *Sex Roles*, 43(9/10), 735-743. doi: 10.1023/A:1007112826569
- Bauer, M. W. (2000). Classical content analysis: A Review. In M.W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.), *Qualitative researching: With text image and sound* (pp.131-151). London: Sage.
- Baym, G. (2000). Constructing moral authority: We in the discourse of television news. *Western Journal of Communication*, 64, 92-111, doi: 10.1080/10570310009374665
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2001). *Individualization: Institutional individualism and its social and political consequences*. London: Sage.
- Beck, U., Giddens, A., & Lash, S. (1994). *Reflexive modernization: Politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Becker, K. (1995). Media and the Ritual Process. *Media, Culture & Society*, 17, 629-46. doi: 10.1177/016344395017004007
- Bellah, R., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. (1991). *The Good Society*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Berger, A.A. (2000). *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture: Advertising's Impact on American Character and Society*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Berger, P. (1969). *The sacred canopy. Elements of a sociological theory of religion*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday
- Berger, P. (1973). *The social reality of religion*. London: Penguin.
- Berger, P. & Luckmann, Th. (1967). *The social construction of reality*. New York: Doubleday.

- Bilandzic, H. (2011). The complicated relationship between media and morality. A response to Ron Tamborini's model of "Moral intuitions and Media Entertainment", from a narrative perspective. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 23 (1), 46-51. doi: 10.1027/1864-1105/a000032
- Bilandzic, H., & Rössler, P. (2004). Life according to television. Implications of genre-specific cultivation effects: The Gratification/Cultivation model. *Communications*, 29 (3), 295-326. doi: 10.1515/comm.2004.020.
- Biltereyst, D. (2004). Media Audiences and the Game of Controversy: On Reality TV, Moral Panic and Controversial Media Stories. *Journal of Media Practice*, 5(1), 117-137. doi: 10.1386/jmpr.5.1.7/0
- Bing Zhang, Y. & Harwood, J. (2004). Modernization and Tradition in an Age of Globalization: Cultural Values in Chinese Television Commercials. *Journal of Communication*, 54 (1), 156-172. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2004.tb02619.x
- Blumer, H. (1954). What is wrong with social theory? *American Sociological Review*, 18, 3-10.
- Bokiniec, M. (2011). Who can find a virtuous CTU agent? Jack Bauer as Modern Hero, Antihero, and Tragic Villain. In A. Fahraeus and D. Yakalı-Çamoğlu (Eds.), *Villains and Villainy: Embodiments of Evil in Literature, Popular Culture and Media* (pp. 193-213). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Boltanski, L. (1999). *Distant suffering: Morality, media and politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bowman, N.D., Droguet, L., & Joeckel, S. (2011, May). *Binding Americans and separating Germans: The influence of morality salience and nationality on media choices*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Boston.
- Brandsma, B. (2007). Het waardebesef van de Nederlander. Wat heeft prioriteit om goed samen te leven? [*The Dutch value orientation. What is necessary to live together?*]. Retrieved from <http://www.filosofie.nl/nl/artikel/5240/het-waardebesef-van-de-nederlander.html>
- Bresnahan, M.J., Inoue, Y., Liu, W.Y., & Nishida, T. (2001). Changing Gender Roles in Prime-Time Commercials in Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. *Sex Roles*, 45 (1/2), 117-131. doi:10.1023/A:1013068519583
- Bretl, D. J. & Cantor, J. (1988). The Portrayal of Men and Women in U.S. Television Commercials: A Recent Content Analysis and Trends over 15 Years. *Sex Roles*, 18 (9/10), 595-609. doi: 10.1007/BF00287963
- Bryant, J., Raney, A. A., & Zillmann, D. (2002). Sports television. In B. Strauss, M. Kolb, & M. Lames (Eds.), *sport-goes-media.de: Zur Medialisierung des Sports* (pp. 51-74). Schorndorf: Hofmann.
- Carey, J. (1975). A cultural approach to communications. *Communication*, 2, 1-22.
- Carey, J.W. (1989). *Communication as culture. Essays on media and society*. New York/ London: Routledge.
- Carls, P. (n.d.). Durkheim. *The Internet encyclopedia of Philosophy. A Peer reviewed academic resource*. ISSN 2161-0002, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/july2016>
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS] (2010). *Bevolking [Population]*. Consulted on 18-10-2010, via <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/bevolking/cijfers/default.htm>
- Cenoz, J., & Jessner, U. (2000). *English in Europe: The acquisition of a third language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, Ltd.
- Chaney, D. (1986). The Symbolic Form of Ritual in Mass Communication. In P. Golding, G. Murdock and P. Schlesinger (Eds.), *Communicating Politics: Mass Communication and Political Process* (pp. 115-32). Leicester: Leicester University Press
- Chatman, S. B. (1989). *Story and discourse: Narrative structure in fiction and film* (5th ed.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Cheng, H. & Schweitzer, J.C. (1996). Cultural values reflected in Chinese and U.S. television commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36, 27-45.
- Chiricos, T., & Eschholz, S. (2002). The racial and ethnic typification of crime and the criminal typification of race and ethnicity in local television news. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 39 (4), 400-420. doi: 10.1177/002242702237286
- Chouliaraki, L. (2013). *The ironic spectator: Solidarity in the age of post-humanitarianism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Cohen, J. & Weiman, G. (2000). Cultivation revisited: Some genres have some effects on some viewers. *Communication Reports*, 13(2), 99-114. doi: 10.1080/08934210009367728
- Coles, G. (2000). Docusoap: Actuality and the serial format. In B. Carson & M. Liewellyn-Jones (Eds.), *Frames and Fictions on Television: The Politics of Identity within Drama* (pp. 27-39). Exeter: Intellect.

- Coltrane, S. & Messineo, M. (2000). The Perpetuation of Subtle Prejudice: Race and Gender Imagery in 1990s Television Advertising. *Sex Roles*, 42 (5/6), 363-389. doi: 10.1023/A:1007046204478
- Corner, J. (1996). *The Art of Record: A critical introduction to documentary*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Costera Meijer, I. & Krijnen, T. (2007). De moraal van televisie: Een empirisch onderzoek naar de lessen van een populair medium. *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap*, 35 (1), 3-22.
- Couldry, N. (2003). *Media rituals: A critical approach*. Psychology Press.
- Couldry, N. (2012). *Media, society, world: Social theory and digital media practice*. Polity.
- Creswell, J. (1994). *Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.
- Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2013). *Prime Time Morality: A longitudinal study of morality in Dutch prime-time fiction*. Paper presented at Etmaal van de Communicatiewetenschap, Rotterdam 7-8 February 2013.
- Daalmans, S., Hijmans, E., & Wester, F. (2014). 'One Night of Prime Time': An Explorative Study of Morality in One Night of Prime Time Television. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality*, 29(3), 184-199, DOI: 10.1080/08900523.2014.918498
- Dalakas, V., & Langenderfer, J. (2007). Consumer satisfaction with television viewing: Insight for the entertainment industry. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 29, 47-59. doi: 10.1300/J396v29n01_03
- Danan, M. (2004). Captioning and Subtitling: Undervalued Language Learning Strategies. *Translators' Journal*, 49, 67-77. doi: 10.7202/009021ar
- Dant, T. (2005). *Consuming morality: Television and postmodern ethics*. Paper presented to Sociology of Consumption Network at the European Sociological Association Conference, Torun, Poland.
- Dant, T. (2012). *Television and the moral imaginary: Society through the small screen*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Dayan, D., & Katz, E. (1994). *Media events*. Harvard University Press.
- De Beer, P. (2004). Normvervaging in Nederland: perceptie of realiteit? [*Fading norms in the Netherlands: perception or reality?*]. *Sociologische Gids*, 51 (3), 236-247.
- De Beer, P. (2007). How individualized are the Dutch? *Current Sociology*, 55(3), 389-413.
- De Haan, J., & Sonck, N. (2013). Mediagebruik en sociale contacten [Media use and social contact]. In M. Cloin, A. van den Broek, R. van den dool, J. de Haan, J. de Hart, P. van Houwelingen, A. Tiessen-Raap-horst, N. Sonck, & J. Spit (Eds.), *Met het oog op de tijd: Een blik op de tijdbesteding van Nederlanders [Regarding time: A view of time allocation by the Dutch]* (pp.81-99). Den Haag: SCP
- De Mooij, M. (1998). *Global Marketing and Advertising: Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- De Waal, F. (2013). *The Bonobo and the Atheist: In search of Humanism among Primates*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- De Wijze, S. (2008). Between Hero and Villain: Jack Bauer and the Problem of Dirty Hands? In J.H.Weed, R.B.Davis and R. Weed (Eds.), 24 and *Philosophy: The World According to Jack* (pp. 17-30). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Den Hoed, P., & Schuijt, K. (2004). Instituties als werkplaatsen van waarden en normen [*Institutions as workplace for values and norms*]. *Sociologische Gids*, 51, 3, 196-214
- Denzin, N. (1989). *Interpretive biography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Donnelly, A.M. (2012). The New American Hero: Dexter, Serial Killer for the Masses. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 45 (1), 15-26. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00908.x
- Dupuis, H. (1980). *Goed te leven: reflecties op de moraal [How to live a good life: reflections on morality]*. Baarn: Ten Have.
- Durkheim, E. (1933 [1893]). *The division of labor in society*. New York: The Free Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1982 [1895]). *The rules of sociological method*. New York: The Free Press
- Durheim, E. (1995 [1912]). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press
- Durkheim, E. (2002 [1925]). *Moral education*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Duyvendak, J.W., & Hurenkamp, M. (2004). *Kiezen voor de kudde. Lichte gemeenschappen en de nieuwe meerderheid [Choosing the herd. Light communities and the new majority]*. Amsterdam: Van Gennep.

- Eden, A., Daalmans, S., & Johnson, B.K. (2015, November). *From hero to zero: Morality predicts enjoyment but self-expansion predicts appreciation of morally ambiguous characters*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association, Las Vegas, NV.
- Eden, A., Daalmans, S., & Johnson, B. K. (2016). Morality Predicts Enjoyment But Not Appreciation of Morally Ambiguous Characters. *Media Psychology*, 1-25. doi: 10.1080/15213269.2016.1182030
- Eden, A., Grizzard, M., & Lewis, R. (2011). Disposition development in drama: the role of moral, immoral and ambiguously moral characters. *International Journal of Arts and Technology*, 1 (4), 33-47. doi:10.1504/IJART.2011.037768
- Eden, A., Grizzard, M., & Lewis, R.J. (2013). Moral Psychology and Media Theory: Historical and Emerging viewpoints. In R. Tamborini (Ed.), *Media and the Moral Mind* (pp. 1-25). New York/ London: Routledge.
- Eden, A., Oliver, M.B., Tamborini, R., Limperos, A., & Woolley, J. (2015). Perceptions of Moral Violations and Personality Traits Among Heroes and Villains. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18(2), 186-208. doi:10.1080/15205436.2014.923462
- Eden, A., Tamborini, R., Lewis, R.J., Grizzard, M., & Weber, R. (2010, June). *Maintaining morality: repeated exposure to narrative entertainment and the salience of moral intuitions*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Singapore.
- Egri, L., (1960). *The Art of Dramatic Writing*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Eisinga, R. N., Scheepers, P. L. H., & Bles, P. H. (2012). *Waardenverandering in Nederland: Resultaten van de SOCON-enquête 1980-2011 [Value changes in the Netherlands: Results of the SOCCON-survey 1980-2011]*. Den Haag: CBS.
- Emons, P. (2011). *Social-cultural changes in Dutch society and their representations in televisionfiction, 1980-2005*. Nijmegen: Knust.
- Emons, P., Wester, F., & Scheepers, P. (2010). "He Works Outside the Home; She Drinks Coffee and Does the Dishes" Gender Roles in Fiction Programs on Dutch Television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 51 (1), 40-53. doi: 10.1080/08838150903550386
- Eschholz, S., Mallard, M., & Flynn, S. (2004). Images of prime time justice: A content analysis of 'NYPD Blue' and 'Law and Order'. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10 (3), 161-180.
- European Value Survey. (2011). *Atlas of European Values*. Retrieved from <http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/new/home.php?lang=nl>
- Felling, A., Peters, J., & Scheepers, P. (2000). *Individualisering in Nederland aan het eind van de twintigste eeuw: empirisch onderzoek naar omstreden hypothesen [Individualisation in the Netherlands at the end of the twentieth century: empirical research of controversial hypotheses]*. Assen: Uitgeverij Van Gorcum.
- Fiske, J. (1987). *Television culture*. London: Routledge.
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communications Monographs*, 51(1), 1-22. doi: 10.1080/03637758409390180
- Fletcher, J. F. (1966). *Situation ethics: The new morality*. Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Forman, H. J. (1935). *Our movie-made children*. New York: NY: Macmillan.
- Fowles, J. (1996). *Advertising and Popular Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Fulford, R. (2014, July). It's bad guys vs. worse guys — the terrific moral swamp of TV drama today. *National Post*. Retrieved from <http://news.nationalpost.com/arts/robert-fulford-its-bad-guys-vs-worse-guys-the-terrific-moral-swamp-of-tv-drama-today>
- Furnham, A., & Mak, T. (1999). Sex-Role Stereotyping in Television Commercials: A Review and Comparison of Fourteen Studies Done on Five Continents Over 25 Years. *Sex Roles*, 41 (5/6), 413-437. doi: 10.1023/A:1018826900972
- Furnham, A., & Paltzer, S. (2010). The portrayal of men and women in television advertisements: An updated review of 30 studies published since 2000. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 51(3), 216-236. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9450.2009.00772.x
- Garrett, S. (2010, May). No more heroes: The rise of the 21st century anti-hero. *Broadcast Media*. Lecture conducted at The University of Oxford, Oxford. Retrieved from <http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Garrett3.pdf>

- Ganahl, D.J., Prinsen, T.J., & Netzley, S.B. (2003). A Content Analysis of Prime Time Commercials: A Contextual Framework of Gender Representation. *Sex Roles*, 49 (9/10), 545-551. doi: 10.1023/A:1025893025658
- Gerbner, G. (1969). Towards cultural indicators – analysis of mass mediated public message systems. *AV Communication Review* 17(2), 137-148.
- Gerbner, G. (1970). Cultural Indicators: The Case of Violence in Television Drama. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 388, 69-81.
- Gerbner, G. (1973). Cultural Indicators: The third voice. In G. Gerbner, L. Gross, & W.H. Melody (Eds.), *Communication technology and social policy* (pp.555-573). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gerbner, G. (1979). Television's influence on values and behaviour. *Masscommunicatie*, 7, 215-222.
- Gerbner, G. (1984). Political Functions of Television Viewing: A Cultivation Analysis. In G. Melischek, K.E. Rosengren & J. Stappers (Eds.), *Cultural indicators: An international symposium* (pp. 329-343). Wenen: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Gerbner, G. (1995). Casting and Fate: Women and Minorities on television drama, game shows, and news. In E. Hollander, C. van der Linden en P. Rutten (Eds.), *Communication, Culture, Community. Liber Amicorum James Stappers* (pp.125-137). Houten: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum
- Gerbner, G. (1998a). Cultivation Analysis: An Overview. *Mass Communication & Society*, 1 (3/4), 175-194. doi: 10.1080/15205436.1998.9677855
- Gerbner, G. (1998b). Stories of Violence and the Public Interest. In K. Brants, J. Hermes & L. van Zoonen (Eds.), *The Media in Question* (pp.135-146). London: Sage.
- Gerbner, G. (1999). The stories we tell. *Peace Review*, 11(1), 9-15. doi: 10.1080/10402659908426225
- Gerbner, G. (2002). Cultural Indicators: The Third Voice. In M. Morgan (Ed.), *Against the Mainstream: The Selected Works of George Gerbner* (pp.175-192). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Gerbner, G. (2005). *George Gerbner Series*. Retrieved via <http://www.mediaed.org/videos/CommercialismPoliticsAndMedia/TheKillingScreens/studyguide/html>
- Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile. *Journal of Communication*, 26, 173-199. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1976.tb01397.x
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Jackson-Beeck, M., & Signorielli, N. (1978). Cultural indicators: violence profile no. 9. *Journal of Communication*, 28(3), 176-207. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1978.tb01646.x
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1980). The "mainstreaming" of America: Violence profile no. 11. *Journal of communication*, 30(3), 10-29. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1980.tb01987.x
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., Signorielli, N., & Shanahan, J. (2002). Growing up with television: cultivation processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media Effects. Advances in theory and research* (pp. 43-67). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gert, B. (2011). The definition of morality. In E.N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/>
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley: Univ of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gitlin, T. (1987). Television's screens: Hegemony in transition. In D. Lazere (Ed.), *American media and mass culture: left perspectives* (pp.240-265). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Gomes, R. C., & Williams, L. F. (1990). Race and crime: The role of the media in perpetuating racism and classism in America. *Urban League Review*, 14(1), 57-69.
- Gottschall, J. (2012). *The Storytelling Animal: How stories make us Human*. Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Grabe, M.E. (1999). Television news magazine crime stories: A functionalist perspective. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 16 (2), 155-171. doi: 10.1080/15295039909367084
- Grabe, M. E. (2002). Maintaining the Moral Order: A Functional Analysis of "The Jerry Springer Show". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 19(3), 311-328. doi: 10.1080/07393180216563

- Grabe, M.E., & Drew, D.G. (2007) Crime Cultivation: Comparisons Across Media Genres and Channels. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 51(1), 147-171. doi: 10.1080/08838150701308143
- Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B.A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(5), 1029-1046. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0015141>
- Greene, J. (2013). *Moral Tribes: Emotion, reason, and the gap between them*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Haidt, J. (2001). The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment. *Psychological Review*, 108(4), 814-834. doi: 10.1037//0033-295X.108.4.814
- Haidt, J., & Joseph, C. (2007). The moral mind: How five sets of innate intuitions guide the development of many culture-specific virtues, and perhaps even modules. In P. Carruthers, S. Laurence, & S. Stich (Eds.), *The innate mind* (vol 3, pp.367-391). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hakemulder, J. (2000). *The moral laboratory: Experiments examining the effects of reading literature on social perception and moral self-concept*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Harding, S., Philips, D., & Fogarty, M. (1986). *Contrasting values in western Europe. Unity, diversity and change*. London: Macmillan.
- Harris, G. (2012). A return to form? Postmasculinist television drama and tragic heroes in the wake of The Sopranos. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, IFirst article, 1-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17400309.2012.708272>
- Harwood, J., & Anderson, K. (2002). The presence and portrayal of social groups on prime- time television. *Communication Reports*, 15, 81-97 doi: 10.1080/08934210209367756
- Hastall, M. R., Bilandzic, H., & Sukalla, F. (2013, June). *Are there genre-specific moral lessons? A content analysis of norm violations depicted in four popular television genres*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, London.
- Hauser, D. (2006). *Moral minds: how nature designed our universal sense of right and wrong*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Hawkins, G. (2001). The ethics of television. *International journal of Cultural Studies*, 4, 412-425. doi: 10.1177/136787790100400403
- Hawkins, R.P., & Pingree, S. (1981). Uniform messages and habitual viewing: Unnecessary assumptions in social reality effects. *Human Communication Research*, 7, 291-301. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.1981.tb00576.x
- Hayes, A. F., & Krippendorff, K. (2007). Answering the call for a standard reliability measure for coding data. *Communication methods and measures*, 1, 77-89. doi: 10.1080/19312450709336664
- Hedegaard, E. (1998, May 14). Jerry Springer: Strippers who kill! Killers who strip! *Rolling Stone*, 786, 41-47.
- Hetsroni, A. & Asya, I. (2002). A comparison of values in infomercials and commercials. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 7(1), 34-45. doi: 10.1108/13563280210416026
- Hijmans, E. (2000). The best of both worlds, spiritualiteit in de talkshow van Oprah Winfrey [The best of both worlds: Spirituality in the Oprah Winfrey Show]. *Sociologische Gids*, 47(6), 421-447.
- Hijmans, E. (2006). De rol van sensitizing concepts: Spiritualiteit in de talkshow van Oprah Winfrey [The role of sensitizing concepts: Spirituality in the Oprah Winfrey Show]. In F. Wester (Ed.), *Inhoudsanalyse: Theorie en praktijk [Content Analysis: theory and practice]* (pp.121-138). Deventer: Kluwer.
- Hijmans, E. (2010). Hoe kom ik hier ongeschonden uit. Morele complexiteit in herinneringen van veteranen [How do I get out unharmed. Moral complexity in memories of veterans]. In H. van den Berg, S. Scagliola & F. Wester (Eds.), *Wat veteranen vertellen. Verschillende perspectieven op verhalen over ervaringen tijdens militaire operaties [Stories veterans tell: Differing perspectives on stories about experiences in military operations]* (pp. 127-170). Amsterdam: Pallas Publication.
- Hill, A. (2005). *Reality TV: Audiences and popular factual television*. New York: Routledge.
- Hill, A. (2007). *Restyling Factual TV: Audiences and News, Documentary and Reality Genres*. New York: Routledge.
- Hitlin, S., & Vaisey, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of the Sociology of Morality*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Hoffner, C.A., & Buchanan, M. (2005). Young Adults' Wishful Identification With Television Characters: The Role of Perceived Similarity and Character Attributes. *Media Psychology* 7, 325-351. doi: 10.1207/S1532785XMEP0704_2

- Holtzman, L. (2000). *Media Messages: What Film, Television, and popular Music teach us about Race, Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. New York / London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Hoonaard, W. van den (1997). *Working with sensitizing concepts*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hoijsink, T. (2001). *De kracht van groepen: normen en rollen [The strength of groups: norms and roles]*. Houten/Dieghem: Stafleu van Loghum.
- Howard, D.L. (2006). Tasting Brylcreem: Law, Disorder, and the FBI in *The Sopranos*. In D. Lavery (Ed.), *Reading the Sopranos: Hit TV from HBO* (pp. 163-178). London/New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.
- Imre, A. (2009). Gender and quality television. *Feminist Media Studies*, 9 (4), 391-407. doi: 10.1080/14680770903232987
- Inthorne, S., & Boyce, T. (2010). 'It's disgusting how much salt you eat!' Television discourses of obesity, health and morality. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13 (1), 83-100. doi: 10.1177/1367877909348540
- Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (2010). *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion, Updated edition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Jamal, K., & Bowie, N.E. (1995). Theoretical considerations for a meaningful code of professional ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 14(9), 703-714. doi: 10.1007/BF00872324
- Janicke, S. H., & Raney, A. A. (2011, May). *Exploring how we enjoy antihero narratives: A comparison of fans and nonfans of 24*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Boston, MA.
- Janicke, S. H., & Raney, A. A. (2015). Exploring the role of identification and moral disengagement in the enjoyment of an antihero television series. *Communications*, 40(4), 485-495. doi: 10.1515/commun-2015-0022
- Jarvis, C., & Burr, V. (2011). The Transformative Potential of Popular Television The Case of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 9(3), 165-182. doi: 10.1177/1541344612436814
- Jensen, K. B. (2013). Definitive and Sensitizing Conceptualizations of Mediatization. *Communication Theory*, 23, 203-222. doi: 10.1111/commt.12014
- Johnson, S. (2005a). *Watching TV makes you smarter*. Consulted via: http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/24/magazine/24TV.html?_r=0
- Johnson, S. (2005b). *Everything Bad is Good for You*. London: Penguin Group.
- Johnson-Cartee, K. S. (2005). *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Jonason, P.K., Webster, G.D., Schmitt, D.P., Norman, P., & Crysel, L. (2012). The antihero in popular culture: Life history theory and the dark triad personality traits. *Review of General Psychology*, 16, 192-199. doi: 10.1037/a0027914
- Kamtekar, R. (2004). Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of Our Character. *Ethics*, 114(3), 458-491. doi: 10.1086/381696
- Keeton, P. (2002). The Sopranos and genre transformation: Ideological negotiation in the gangster film. *New Jersey Journal of Communication*, 10 (2), 131-148. doi: 10.1080/15456870209367425
- Kerr, M. (2012, May). Falling in love with morally ambiguous television characters. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/consider-the-zeitgeist/201205/falling-in-love-morally-ambiguous-television-characters>
- Kitzinger, J. (1998). The gender-politics of news production: Silenced voices and false memories. In C. Carter, G. Branston, & S. Allan (Eds.), *News, gender and power* (pp. 186-203). London: Routledge.
- Klapper, J. T. (1960). *Effects of Mass Communication*. New York: Free Press.
- Koeman, J. (2007). Cultural values in commercials: Reaching and representing the multicultural market. *Communications*, 32, 223-253. doi: 10.1515/COMMUN.2007.013
- Koeman, J., Peeters, A., & d'Haenens, L. (2007). Diversity Monitor 2005: Diversity as a quality aspect of television in the Netherlands. *Communications: the European journal of communication research*, 32, 97-121. doi: 10.1515/COMMUN.2007.005,
- Kooiker, S. (1995). Je gezondheid is je kostbaarste bezit [Your health is your most valuable possession]. In S. Kooiker & M. Mootz (Eds.), *Patiënt en professie [Patient and profession]* (pp.63-96). Rijswijk: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

- Konijn, E. A., & Hoorn, J. F. (2005). Some like it bad: Testing a Model for Perceiving and Experiencing Fictional Characters. *Media Psychology*, 7, 107-144. doi: 10.1207/S1532785XMEPo702_1
- Krakowiak, K.M. (2008). *When good characters do bad things: Examining the effect of moral ambiguity of enjoyment*. Unpublished dissertation. Pennsylvania State University, August. Retrieved from <https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/paper/8577/3859>
- Krakowiak, K.M. (2010). Fictionalized torture: Jack Bauer's war on Terrorism. In H. Hood & S.L. Borden (Eds.), *Ethics and entertainment: Essays on media culture and media morality* (pp.245-262). Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Krakowiak, K.M. (2015). Some like it morally ambiguous: The effects of individual differences on the enjoyment of different character types. *Western Journal of Communication*, 79(4), 472-491. doi: 10.1080/10570314.2015.1066028
- Krakowiak, K. M., & Oliver, M. B. (2012). When good characters do bad things: Examining the effect of moral ambiguity on enjoyment. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 117-135. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01618.x
- Krakowiak, K. M., & Tsay, M. (2011). The role of moral disengagement in the enjoyment of real and fictional characters. *International Journal of Arts and Technology*, 4, 90-101. doi: 10.1504/IJART.2011.037772
- Krakowiak, K. M., & Tsay-Vogel, M. (2013). What makes characters' bad behaviors acceptable? The effects of character motivation and outcome on perceptions, character liking, and moral disengagement. *Mass Communication & Society*, 16, 179-199. doi: 10.1080/15205436.2012.690926
- Krakowiak, K. M., & Tsay-Vogel, M. (2014). The dual role of morally ambiguous characters: Examining the effect of morality salience on narrative responses. *Human Communication Research*, X, XX-XX (online first publication). doi: 10.1111/hcre.12050
- Krijnen, T. (2007). *There is more(s) in television: Studying the relationship between television and moral imagination*. Doctoral dissertation: University of Amsterdam.
- Krijnen, T., & Costera Meijer, I. (2005). The moral imagination in primetime television. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8 (3), 353-374. doi: 10.1177/1367877905055682
- Krijnen, T., & Tan, E. (2009). Reality TV as a moral laboratory: A dramaturgical analysis of The Golden Cage. *Communications*, 34, 449-472. doi 10.1515/COMM.2009.027
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). Content analysis. An introduction to its methodology. Beverly Hills Ca: Sage.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks / London: Sage Publications.
- Kuipers, G. (2008). De VS in Europese huiskamers [The United States in European living rooms]. *Sociologie*, 42(2/3), 174-194.
- Lash, C. (1977). *Haven in a heartless world. The family besieged*. New York: Basic Books.
- Leiss, W., Kline, S. & Jhally, S. (1990). *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of well-being* (2nd ed.). London/New York: Routledge.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1979). *Structural Anthropology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Lewis, R. J., Tamborini, R., & Weber, R. (2014). Testing a dual process model of media enjoyment and appreciation. *Journal of Communication*, 64, 397-416. doi: 10.1111/jcom.12101
- Lind, R.A., & Rarick, D.L. (1992). Public Attitudes toward ethical issues in TV programming: Multiple viewer orientations. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 7(3), 133-150. doi: 10.1207/s15327728jmmeo703_1
- Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J., & Bracken, C. C. (2004). A call for standardization in content analysis reliability. *Human Communication Research*, 30(3), 434-437. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.2004.tb00739.x
- Love, M.C. (2002). The Revised ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct: Summary of the Work of Ethics 2000. *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics*, 15, 441-476.
- Lowery, S. A., & DeFleur, M. L. (1995). *Milestones in mass communication research: Media effects*. (3rd edition). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Luckmann, Th. (1967). *The invisible religion. The problem of religion in modern society*. New York: MacMillan.
- Luckmann, T. (2002). Moral Communication in Modern Societies. *Human Studies*, 25, 19-32. doi: 10.1023/A:1014838423896
- Lundy, L. K., Ruth, A. M., & Park, T. D. (2008). Simply Irresistible: Reality TV Consumption Patterns. *Communication Quarterly*, 56(2), 208-225. doi: 10.1080/01463370802026828

- Lule, J. (2001). *Daily news, eternal stories. The mythological role of journalism*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Luyt, R. (2011). Representation of Gender in South African Television Advertising: A Content Analysis. *Sex Roles*, 65, 356-370. DOI 10.1007/s11199-011-0027-0
- Maira, S. (2009). "Good" and "Bad" Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and US Orientalisms. *Feminist Studies*, 631-656.
- Mar, R.A., & Oatley, K. (2008). The Function of Fiction is the Abstraction and Simulation of Social Experience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(3), 173-192. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-6924.2008.00073.x
- Martin, B. (2013). *Difficult Men: Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution From The Sopranos and The Wire to Mad Men and Breaking Bad*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Mastro, D., Enriquez, M., Lewis, R. J., Grizzard, M., Bowman, N. D., Prabhu, S., & Tamborini, R. (2011). *A content analytic examination of morality displays in Spanish and English-language programming*. Unpublished raw data. University of Arizona.
- Mastro, D., Enriquez, M., Bowman, N.D., Prabhu, S., & Tamborini, R. (2013). Morality subcultures and media production: How Hollywood minds the morals of its audience. In R. Tamborini (Ed.), *Media and the Moral Mind* (pp. 75-92). New York/ London: Routledge.
- Mastro D. & Greenberg, B.S. (2000). The portrayal of racial minorities on prime time television. *Journal of Broadcasting Electronic Media*, 44, 690-703. doi:10.1207/s15506878jobem4404_10
- Mastro, D. E. & Stern, S. R. (2003). Representations of Race in Television Commercials: A Content Analysis of Prime-Time Advertising. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 47 (4), 638-647. doi: 10.1207/s15506878jobem4704_9
- McClure, H. R. (2011). *The crystallization of a moral panic: A content analysis of Anglophone Canadian print media discourse on Arabs and Muslims pre- and post-9/11* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (Accession Order No. 3487058).
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187. doi: 10.1086/267990
- McQuail, D. (2000). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage.
- Merskin, D. (2004). The construction of Arabs as enemies: Post-September 11 discourse of George W. Bush. *Mass Communication & Society*, 7(2), 157-175. doi: 10.1207/s15327825mcs0702_2
- Mittell, J. (2003). Audiences talking genre: Television talk shows and cultural hierarchies. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 31(1), 36-46. doi: 10.1080/01956050309602867
- Mittell, J. (2006). Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television. *The Velvet Light Trap*, 58, 29-40. doi: 10.1353/vlt.2006.0032
- Morgan, M. (2007). What do young people learn about the world from watching television? In S.R. Mazzarella (Ed.), *20 Questions about Youth & the Media* (pp.153-166). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc
- Morgan, M., & Shanahan, J. (2010). The state of cultivation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54(2), 337-355. doi: 10.1080/08838151003735018
- Morrison, D., Kieran, M., Svennevig M., & Ventress, S. (2007). *Media and Values. Intimate transgressions in a changing moral and cultural landscape*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mueller, B. (1987). Reflections of culture: An analysis of Japanese and American advertising appeals. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 27, 51-59.
- Nabi, R. L., Biely, E. N., Morgan, S. J., & Stitt, C. R. (2003). Reality-based television programming and the psychology of its appeal. *Media Psychology*, 5(4), 303-330. doi: 10.1207/S1532785XMEPo504_01
- Newcomb, H. (1978). Assessing the Violence Profile Studies of Gerbner and Gross: A Humanistic Critique and Suggestion. *Communication Research*, 5(3), 264-282. doi: 10.1177/009365027800500303
- Newcomb, H. (1988). 'One Night of Prime Time: An Analysis of Television's Multiple Voices'. In J. W. Carey (Ed.), *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press* (pp.89-112). Newbury Park (CA): Sage Publications, Inc.
- Newcomb, H.M., & Hirsch, P.M. (1983). Television as a Cultural Forum: Implications for Research. *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 8(3), 561-573. doi: 10.1080/10509208309361170
- Newcomb, H., & Hirsch, P. (1984). Television as cultural forum. In W. Rowland & B. Watkins (Eds.), *Interpreting television: Current research perspectives* (pp.58-74). Beverly Hills: Sage.

- Nimrod, G., Adoni, H., & Nossek, H. (2015). Media Audiences| The Internet as a Cultural Forum: A European Perspective. *International Journal of Communication*, 9, 321-341.
- Onkenhout, P. (2013). Dubbelzien, profiel: de hedendaagse kijker [Seeing double, profile: the contemporary viewer]. *De Volkskrant*, 11-5-2013.
- Ossewaarde, M. (2010). Calling citizens to a moral way of life: A Dutch example of moralized politics. *Human Affairs*, 20, 338-355. doi: 10.2478/v10023-010-0035-7
- Paek, H.J., Nelson, M.R., & Vilela, A.M. (2011). Examination of Gender-role Portrayals in Television Advertising across Seven Countries. *Sex Roles*, 64, 192-207. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9850-y
- Patton, M. Q. (1980). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Pennekamp, S. (2011). *Monitor Representatie 2010 [Monitor representation 2010]*. Den Haag: NPO
- Peterson, R. T. & Ross, D. T. (1997). A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Mature Individuals in Television Commercials. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16, 425-433. doi: 10.1023/A:1017901125869
- Polatis, K. (2014, June). Why moral ambiguity is popular on TV and the big screen. *Deseret News*, retrieved via <http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1640/Why-moral-ambiguity-is-popular-on-TV-and-the-big-screen.html>
- Pollay, R. W. (1983). Measuring the cultural values manifest in advertising. *Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 6(1), 71-92. doi: 10.1080/01633392.1983.10505333
- Pollay, R.W. (1985). American Advertising and Societal Values during the twentieth Century. In C.T. Tan & J.N. Sheth (Eds.), *Historical Perspectives in Consumer Research: National and International Perspectives* (pp.60-71). Singapore: Association for Consumer Research.
- Pollay, R.W. (1986). The Distorted Mirror: Reflections on Unintended Consequences of Advertising. *The Journal of Marketing*, 50 (2), 18-36.
- Pollay, R.W. & Gallagher, K. (1990). Advertising and Cultural Values: Reflections in the Distorted Mirror. *International Journal of Advertising*, 9, 359-372. doi: 10.1080/02650487.1990.11107165
- Potter, W.J., & Ware, W. (1987). An analysis of the contexts of antisocial acts on prime-time television. *Communication Research*, 16(6), 664-686. doi: 10.1177/009365087014006003
- Potter, W. J., & Vaughan, M. (1997). Antisocial behaviors in television entertainment: Trends and profiles. *Communication Research Reports*, 14(1), 116-124. doi: 10.1080/08824099709388652
- Rai, T. S., & Holyoak, K.J. (2013). Exposure to Moral Relativism Compromises Moral Behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49 (6), 995-1001. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2013.06.008.
- Railton, P. (2003). *Facts, values, and norms: Essays toward a morality of consequence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Raney, A. A. (2002). Moral judgment as a predictor of enjoyment of crime drama. *Media Psychology*, 4, 307-324. doi: 10.1207/S1532785XMEP0404_01
- Raney, A. A. (2004). Expanding disposition theory: Reconsidering character liking, moral evaluations, and enjoyment. *Communication Theory*, 14, 348-369. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2004.tb00319.x
- Raney, A. A. (2005). Punishing media criminals and moral judgment: The impact on enjoyment. *Media Psychology*, 7, 145-163. doi: 10.1207/S1532785XMEP0702_2
- Raney, A. A., & Bryant, J. (2002). Moral judgment and crime drama: An integrated theory of enjoyment. *Journal of Communication*, 52, 402-415. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2002.tb02552.x
- Raney, A. A., & Janicke, S. H. (2013). How we enjoy and why we seek out morally complex characters in media entertainment. In R. Tamborini (Ed.), *Media and the moral mind* (pp.152-170). London, England: Routledge.
- Raney, A.A., Schmid, H., Niemann, J., & Ellensohn, M. (2009, May). *Testing affective disposition theory: A comparison of the enjoyment of the hero and anti-hero narrative*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago.
- Redden, G. (2008). Economy and reflexivity in makeover television. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 22, 485-494. doi: 10.1080/10304310802189964
- Rich, E. (2011). 'I see her being obese!' Public pedagogy, reality media and the obesity crisis. *Health*, 15 (1), 3-21. doi: 10.1177/1363459309358127
- Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. (2014). *Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research*. New York: Routledge.

- Rosenberg, A. (2012). *From 'The Shield' to 'Breaking Bad': How Anti-Hero shows make women do the hard work*. Retrieved from <http://thinkprogress.org/alyssa/2012/07/17/523831/the-shield-breaking-bad/>
- Rosengren, K.E. (1984). Cultural Indicators for the Comparative Study of Culture. In G. Meliscek, K.E. Rosengren & J. Stappers (Eds.), *Cultural indicators: An international symposium* (pp. 11-47). Wenen: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Rosenkoetter, L. I. (2001). Television and Morality. In D. G. Singer & J. L. Singer (Eds.), *Handbook of Children and the Media* (pp.463-474). Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ross, K. (2007). The journalist, the housewife, the citizen and the press: Women and men as sources in local news narratives. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, 8(4), 449-473. doi: 10.1177/1464884907078659
- Rutledge Shields, V. (1997). Selling the Sex that Sells: Mapping the Evolution of Gender Advertising research Across Three Decades. In B.R. Burleson & A.W. Kunkel (Eds.), *Communication Yearbook 20* (pp.71-109). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Sanders, M., & Tsay-Vogel, M. (2015). Beyond Heroes and Villains: Examining Explanatory Mechanisms Underlying Moral Disengagement. *Mass Communication and Society*, doi: 10.1080/15205436.2015.1096944
- Schaffraad, P. (2009). *Controversial Outsiders: A Cross-National Study of Media Attention to the Far-Right 1986-2004*. Enschede: Ipskamp Drukkers.
- Scharrer, E., Kim, D.D., Lin, K., & Liu, Z. (2006). Working Hard or Hardly working. Gender, Humor, and the Performance of Domestic Chores in Television Commercials. *Mass Communication and Society*, 9(2), 215-238. doi: 10.1207/s15327825mcs0902_5
- Schnabel, P. (2004a). Het zestiende sociaal en cultureel rapport kijkt zestien jaar vooruit [The sixteenth social and cultural report looks sixteen year ahead]. In P. Schnabel (Ed.), *In het zicht van de toekomst* (pp. 47-90) Den Haag: SCP.
- Schnabel, P. (2004b). Samenvatting [Summary]. In P. Schnabel (Ed.), *In het zicht van de toekomst [In view of the future]* (p. 5-44). Den Haag: SCP.
- Schnabel, P. (2004c). Individualiseren in wisselend perspectief [Individualization in changing perspective]. In P. Schnabel (Ed.), *Individualiseren en sociale integratie [Individualisation and social integration]* (p. 9-30). Den Haag: SCP.
- Scott, D.K. & Gobetz, R.H. (1992). Hard news/ soft news content of the national broadcast networks, 1972-1987. *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, 406-412. doi: 10.1177/107769909206900214
- Selnow, G. (1986). Solving Problems on Prime-Time Television. *Journal of Communication*, 36 (2), 63-72. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1986.tb01424.x
- Selnow, G. (1990). Values in Prime-Time Television. *Journal of Communication*, 40 (2), 64-74. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1990.tb02262.x
- Segijn, C., Bartholomé, G., Pennekamp, S., & Timmers, M. (2014). De afbeelding van statusverschillen in sekse en etniciteit in Nederlandse non-fictieprogramma's. *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap* (42) 3, 305-320. doi: 10.5553/TCW/138469302014042003008
- Sender, K., & Sullivan, M. (2008). Epidemics of will, failures of self-esteem: Responding to fat bodies in The Biggest Loser and What Not to Wear. *Continuum*, 22 (4), 573-584. DOI: 10.1080/10304310802190046
- Shafer, D. M., & Raney, A. A. (2012). Exploring how we enjoy antihero narratives. *Journal of Communication*, 63, 1-19. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01682.x
- Shamir, R. (2008). The age of responsibility: on market-embedded morality. *Economy and Society*, 37(1), 1-19, doi: 10.1080/03085140701760833
- Shedlosky-Shoemaker, R., Costabile, K. A., & Arkin, R. M. (2014). Self-expansion through fictional characters. *Self and Identity*, 13, 556-578. doi: 10.1080/15298868.2014.882269
- Shrum, L. J. (1999). Television and persuasion: Effects of the programs between the ads. *Psychology and Marketing*, 16(2), 119-140. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1520-6793(199903)16:2<119::AID-MAR4>3.0.CO;2-R
- Signorelli, N. & Bacue, A. (1999). Recognition and Respect: A Content Analysis of Prime-Time Television Characters across three decades. *Sex Roles*, 40 (7/8), 527-544. doi: 10.1023/A:1018883912900
- Signorielli, N. & Morgan, M. (2001). Television and the family: The cultivation perspective. In J. Bryant & J.A. Bryant (Eds.), *Television and the American family* (pp.333-351). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Silverstone, R. (2002). Complicity and collusion in the mediation of everyday life. *New Literary History*, 33(4), 761–780. doi: 10.1353/nlh.2002.0045
- Skeggs, B. (2009). The moral economy of person production: the class relations of self-performance on 'reality' television. *The Sociological Review*, 57(4), 626–644. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2009.01865.x
- Skeggs, B., & Wood, H. (2012). *Reacting to Reality Television: Performance, Audience and Value*. New York: Routledge.
- Slater, M. D., Johnson, B. K., Cohen, J., Comello, M. L. G., & Ewoldsen, D. R. (2014). Temporarily expanding the boundaries of the self: Motivations for entering the story world and implications for narrative effects. *Journal of Communication*, 64, 439–455. doi: 10.1111/jcom.12100
- Smith, S.W., Smith, S.L., Pieper, K.M., Yoo, J.H., Ferris, A.L., Downs, E., & Bowden, B. (2006). Altruism on American Television: Examining the Amount of, and the Context Surrounding, Acts of Helping and Sharing. *Journal of Communication*, 56, 707–727. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00316.x
- Soffer, O. (2009). The competing ideals of objectivity and dialogue in American journalism. *Journalism*, 10(4), 473–491. doi: 10.1177/1464884909104950
- Sonck, N. & Pennekamp, S.F. (2014). *Media:Tijd 2014 [Media:Time 2014]*. Den Haag: Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau.
- Stichting Kijkonderzoek (2014). *Jaarpersbericht kijkcijfers [Year overview TV Rating]*. Retrieved from https://kijkonderzoek.nl/images/Jaarpersberichten/Jaarpersbericht_2014.pdf
- Sumser, J. (1996). *Morality and social order in television crime drama*. Jefferson, North Carolina, London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Sutherland, J.C., & Siniawsky, S.J. (1982). The Treatment and Resolution of Moral Violations on Soap Operas. *Journal of Communication*, 32(2), 67–74. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1982.tb00496.x
- Tamborini, R. (2011). Moral intuition and media entertainment. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 23(1), 39–45. doi: 10.1027/1864-1105/a000031
- Tamborini, R. (2013). A model of intuitive morality and exemplars. In R. Tamborini (Ed.), *Media and the Moral Mind* (pp. 43–74). New York/ London: Routledge.
- Tamborini, R., Eden, A., Bowman, N. D., Grizzard, M. and Lachlan, K. A. (2012). The Influence of Morality Subcultures on the Acceptance and Appeal of Violence. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 136–157. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01620.x
- Tamborini, R., Grizzard, M., Eden, A., & Lewis, R. (2011, November). *Imperfect heroes and villains: Patterns of upholding and violating distinct moral domains and character appeal*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Tamborini, R., Grizzard, M., Lewis, R. J., & Eden, A. (2011, November). *Priming Intuitive Morality: The Effect of Heroes and Villains on Immediate Affective Response to Moral Stimuli*. Paper to be presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Tamborini, R., Weber, R., Eden, A., Bowman, N.D., & Grizzard, M. (2010). Repeated exposure to daytime soap opera and shifts in moral judgment toward social convention. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 54(4), 621–640. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01620.x
- Tavener, J. (2000). Media, Morality, and Madness: The Case against Sleaze TV. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 17(1), 63–85. doi: 10.1080/15295030009388376
- Tester, K. (2001). *Compassion, morality and the media*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Thompson, J. B. (1995). *The media and modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tian, Q., & Hoffner, C.A. (2010). Parasocial Interaction With Liked, Neutral, and Disliked Characters on a Popular TV Series. *Mass Communication and Society*, 13, 250–269. doi: 10.1080/15205430903296051
- Tipton, S. M. (2002). Social Differentiation and moral pluralism. In R. Madsen, W.M. Sullivan, A. Swidler & S.M. Tipton (Eds.), *Meaning and Modernity, Religion, Polity and Self* (pp. 15–40). Berkley: University of California Press.
- Trusted, J. (2002). *Moral principles and social values*. London: Routledge.
- Tsay-Vogel, M., & Krakowiak, K. M. (2015). Exploring Viewers' Responses to Nine Reality TV Subgenres. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000103>

- Turiel, E. (2002). *The Culture of Morality: Social development, context, and conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Der Werff, T. (2013a). 'The golden age of TV is dead; Long live the golden age of TV'. Retrieved from <http://www.avclub.com/article/the-golden-age-of-tv-is-dead-long-live-the-golden--103129>.
- Van der Werff, T. (2013b). 'Breaking Bad's racial politics: Walter White, angry white man. Retrieved from http://www.salon.com/2013/09/22/breaking_bads_racial_politics_walter_white_angry_white_man/.
- Van Ommen, M., Daalmans, S., & Weijers, A. (2014). Who is the doctor in this house? Analyzing the moral evaluations of medical students and physicians of House, M.D. *AJOB Empirical Bioethics*, 5(4), 61–74. doi: 10.1080/23294515.2014.938198
- Van Praag, C. (2004). Enkele gedachten over de morele crisis [Some thoughts on the moral crisis]. In H. Boutellier, P. de Beer & C. van Praag (Eds.), *Bindingsloos of Bandeloos: Normen, waarden en individualiseren [Without connections or without bounds: Norms, values and individualisation]* (pp. 29–38). Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- Van Selm, M, Westerhof, G.J. & Vos, B. (2007). Competent en veelzijdig: Representatie van ouderen in de Ster-reclame tien jaar later [Competent and versatile: The representation of the elderly in STER commercials]. *Tijdschrift voor Gerontologie en Geriatrie*, 38, 57–64.
- Verplaetse, J. (2008). *Het morele instinct: Over de natuurlijke oorsprong van onze moraal [The moral instinct: about the natural origins of our morals]*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Nieuwezijds.
- Vorderer, P., Klimmt, C., & Ritterfeld, U. (2004). Enjoyment: At the heart of media entertainment. *Communication Theory*, 14(4), 388–408. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2004.tb00321.x
- Vorderer, P., & Knobloch, S. (2000). Conflict and suspense in drama. In D. Zillmann & P. Vorderer (Eds.), *Media entertainment: The psychology of its appeal* (pp. 59–72). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Warner, K.E. (1987). Television and health education: Stay tuned. *American Journal of Public Health*, 77, 140–142.
- Wayne, M.L. (2013). Moral ambiguity, colourblind ideology, and the racist other in prime time cable drama. *Cinephile*, 9(1), 15–19.
- Wayne, M.L. (2014). Ambivalent anti-heroes and racist rednecks on basic cable: Post-race ideology and white masculinity on FX. *Journal of Popular Television*, 2(2), 205–225. doi: 10.1386/jptv.2.2.205_1
- Weaver, R., Salamonson, Y., Koch, J., & Porter, G. (2012). The CSI effect at university: forensic science students' television viewing and perceptions of ethical issues. *Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 44(4), 381–391. doi: 10.1080/00450618.2012.691547
- Weaver, R., & Wilson, I. (2011). Australian medical students' perceptions of professionalism and ethics in medical television programs. *BMC Medical Education*, 11(50). doi:10.1186/1472-6920-11-50
- Weijers, A. (2014). *The craft of screenwriting*. Den Haag: Boom Lemma.
- Wernick, A. (1991). *Promotional Culture: Advertising, ideology and symbolic expression*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Wertham, F. (1954). *Seduction of the innocent*. New York, NY: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston.
- Wester, F. (1995). *Strategieën voor kwalitatief onderzoek [Strategies for qualitative research]*. Bussum: Coutinho.
- Wester, F., & Peters, V. (2004). *Kwalitatieve Analyse: Uitgangspunten en procedures [Qualitative analysis: Basic assumptions and procedures]*. Bussum: Coutinho.
- Wester, F., & Weijers, A. (2006). Narratieve analyse en transcriptie; Culturele thema's in de sitcom [Narrative Analysis and transcription: Cultural themes in the sitcom]. In F. Wester (Ed.), *Inhoudsanalyse: theorie en praktijk [Content Analysis: theory and practice]* (pp. 161–189). Deventer: Kluwer.
- Westerstahl, J. (1983). Objective news reporting. General Premises. *Communication Research*, 10(3), 403–424. doi: 10.1177/009365083010003007
- Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het regeringsbeleid (WRR). (2003). *Waarden, normen en de last van het gedrag [Values, norms and the burden of behavior]*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Wilson, C., Robinson, T., & Callister, M. (2012). Surviving Survivor: A content analysis of antisocial behavior and its context in a popular reality television show. *Mass Communication and Society*, 15(2), 261–283. doi: 10.1080/15205436.2011.567346

- Wuthnow, R. (1987). *Meaning and moral order: Explorations in cultural analysis*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Zigon, J. (2008). *Morality: An Anthropological perspective*. Oxford: Berg.
- Zijderveld, A. C. (2000). *The institutional imperative: The interface of institutions and networks*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Zillmann, D. (2000). Basal morality in drama appreciation. In I. Bondebjerg (Ed.), *Moving Images, culture and the mind* (pp. 53-63). Luton, UK: Luton University Press.
- Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1975). Viewer's moral sanction of retribution in the appreciation of dramatic presentations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 11, 572-582.
- Zillmann, D., & Cantor, J. R. (1977). Affective responses to the emotions of a protagonist. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13, 155-165. doi:10.1037=0022-3514.35.8.587
- Zillmann, D., & Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2001). Emotional reactions to narratives about the fortunes of personae in the news theater. *Poetics*, 29, 189-206. doi:10.1016/S0304-422X(01)00042-0
- Zillmann, D., & Paulus, P. B. (1993). Spectators: Reactions to sports events and effects on athletic performance. In R. N. Singer, M. Murphey, & L. K. Tennant (Eds.), *Handbook on research in sport psychology* (pp. 600-619). New York: Macmillan.
- Zillmann, D., Taylor, K., & Lewis, K. (1998). News as nonfiction theater: How dispositions toward the public cast of characters affect reactions. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 42(2), 153-169. doi: 10.1080/08838159809364441

Appendices

APPENDIX I

**“Through the looking glass:
an exploration of the good life as
represented in Dutch television
commercials”**

Serena Daalmans, Ellen Hijmans & Fred Wester.

Paper presented at the annual conference of the Netherlands Flanders
Communication Association (NeFCa), Etmaal van de Communicatiewetenschap
(2011), 24-25 January, Enschede.

Introduction

Television commercials illicit a multitude of different feelings and opinions, in people in general and scholars alike, ranging from contempt to fascination (Berger, 2000; Fowles, 1996). Television commercials evoke such varied responses because they are a pervasive presence in our day to day lives, since they are a part of our most time-consuming pastime, namely watching television. An average Dutch person, who watches three hours of television a day, also consumes about 17 minutes of commercials a day (SPOT, 2009). This roughly translates in about 100 television commercials a day. These facts alone make television commercials an inescapable part of everyday life.

Since television commercials are such a presence in our day-to-day lives, it is unsurprising that they have been a topic of research for a long time, with research objectives ranging from assessing its effect on consumers and charting viewer's reception of the commercials. Little research has however focused on the content and cultural meanings of television commercials, which is surprising since television commercials sell much more than only the products they endorse (Leiss, Kline & Jhally, 1990; Pollay, 1983; Wernick, 1991).

Commercials sell ideals, values as well as images of success, competence, worth, love, popularity, sexuality and normalcy. They tell us who we are in the world, and who we should strive to be (Gerbner, 1998; Wernick, 1991). Commercials show us through a focus on and selection of certain lifestyles and domains, as well as through the values they represent, what counts as good, important and valuable in our culture. They show us the path towards a good, desirable and worthwhile life through consumption. To make this message resonate with the audiences and motivate consumers to action, television commercials must appeal to consumers' interests, needs, ideals, goals, and problems, which more often than not reflect their cultural values (Bing Zhang & Harwood, 2004; de Mooij, 1998; Mueller, 1987; Pollay & Gallagher, 1990). That said, this doesn't mean that there is no hierarchy or differentiations in the palette of represented life domains, problems, goals and values in television commercials, because while it is true that they reflect life domains, problems, goals and cultural values they do so "on a very selective basis, echoing and reinforcing certain attitudes, behaviors and values far more frequently than others" (Pollay, 1986, p.32-33). This is why television commercials, and advertising in general, are often characterized by the metaphor of a distorted, twisted or fun-house mirror of life (Mueller, 1987; Pollay, 1986;).

In sum, commercials can be seen as a vehicle of social communication, as an aggregate system of stories and images, and as one of the means that reveal a society's conversation with itself about what is of general importance at the core

of a culture. The question that arises however is what aspects of society are focused on in Dutch television commercials, how has this changed over time and which cultural tendencies do they illuminate? This leads to the following general research aim in this study which is to shed light on:

The good life as represented through the lens of Dutch television commercials.

Theoretical framework

In this study we rely on the theoretical foundations of cultivation research, and in specific the theoretical concept of storytelling (Gerbner, 1999; 2005). Commercials form a specific sort of story, a story of values and choice, it tells you what you should do or should want in life. “They present things, behaviors, or styles of life as desirable or undesirable, propose ways to obtain or avoid them, and the price to be paid for attainment of failure” (Gerbner, 1999, p.10). As such television commercials become a very important source of socialization of people, young and old, providing product knowledge as well as cultural knowledge.

George Gerbner and his associates believe that all television programs, including commercials, through the stories they tell present “us with a relatively coherent system of images and messages” which together form a certain worldview which reflects and legitimizes the beliefs and values of the existing social order (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Shannahan, 2002, p.44). This assumption makes all television products, including television commercials, a reflection of the existing cultural and societal power structures within a society. For example, the general overrepresentation of men in television programs (including television commercials) and underrepresentation of women is a reflection of the patriarchal structure that is present in society (Gerbner, 1995; Rutledge Shields, 1997; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999).

For television commercials, these assumptions have led to profound concern about the opinions and views about gender, age and race-characteristics that are “sold” along with the product. Scholars agree that the possible implications of these skewed representations in television programs as well as television commercials range from to a distorted view of minorities to a distorted self-image (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Morgan, 2007). Aside from the extensively researched television commercial demography which voiced concerns about the representation of structural inequality in society, there are also other structural aspects that might illuminate other cultural tendencies of society. The focal point of this study therefore includes the demography of Dutch television but also includes other societal aspects, because the world of television commercials is also focused

on specific attitudes, behaviors, values and lifestyles (Pollay & Gallagher, 1990, p.360).

As mentioned earlier Gerbner and colleagues view television as a system, the aggregate of different types of television programs including commercials, which presents viewers with a certain selectively constructed perspective on social reality (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Shannahan, 2002). Television as a system, but also the various programs that make up this system, shows and cultivates beliefs about what is, what is important, what is good and bad and what is related to what else. This means that television commercials represent society with a certain amount of selectivity, and in this representation they show us what and who exist in the world (*what is*), they tell us what the important things in life are (*what is important*), what problems we might face in life and how to solve them and it shows us what we should strive for in life (*what is right and wrong*) (Gerbner, 2002, p.184-185). It is in these aspects (i.e. represented life domains, problems, ideals and values) that very little research is done and more insights are warranted, especially tangible evidence for cultural tendencies in Dutch television commercials. Furthermore as a vehicle of social communication and a representation of society television commercials might also reflect societal change when examined over a longer time period, which warrants a longitudinal approach in this study.

Objective and research questions

As we have pointed out television commercials do more than just offer tantalizing product description that serve as stimuli for consumers, they represent a certain view of the world. In its constructed nature this world view might be very different from reality, but still very illuminating. Our analysis is focused on four explorative questions which aim to reconstruct the representation of the good life in the message of television commercials, by analyzing the characteristics of the message system of commercials:

1. Who inhabits the world of Dutch television commercials?
2. Which selection of life domains is represented in the world of Dutch television commercials?
3. Which values are represented in the world of Dutch television commercials?
4. How has the representation of the domains, problems, ideals and values as well as the demography of Dutch television commercials changed over time?

Method

This study analyzed a large scale, longitudinal sample of Dutch television commercials through quantitative content analysis. Content analysis is a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18). The texts in the study are television commercials and the present study examined 1,999 commercials spread out over the three examined years 1980, 1995, 2005. The longitudinal approach in this study serves two purposes, it allows us to make analyze trends over time and it serves as a valuable methodological check. After all, without a longitudinal control, findings for a specific year could be anomalous.

Table 1 Number of commercials per year and per network type

	1980	1995	2005	Total
Public broadcasting	641	411	304	1356
Commercial Broadcasting	0	236	375	611
Total	641	647	679	1967

Note. The Netherlands gained its first commercial channel in 1989, and is therefore included in the sample from 1995 forward.

The material was coded by 23 communication science students along with the authors of the article. The students all participated in at least 10 hours of coder training. The coder training consisted of discussions to explain the coding schemes as well as hands-on coding of commercials as a group and individually.

The coding instrument, focused on a large scope of topics, of which only a smaller amount are used in this analysis. General characteristics of the commercials such as year, setting, presence of music, type of commercial (i.e. commercial, noncommercial, public service advertising) and type of product/service were recorded. For the analysis of the demography the main character was recorded per commercial and was discerned as the character in a leading role, the carrier of the ‘storyline’ in the commercial and vital to the understanding of the message of the commercial (main character could also be the voice-over). Four characteristics related to the main character were coded, gender, age, ethnicity, social roles of professional.

The coding options for life domains and values were derived from pretesting by the authors in an open and inductive approach. Life domains were recorded to

discern if there was any selectivity in the representation of society. Life domains were specified as the domain in which the product or brand belonged or can be utilized, not to be confused with the ‘setting’ of the commercial.

Pretesting also revealed that often two values were present in commercials, one tied to the commercial goal (i.e. literal message) and the other to the story in the commercial. This is very similar to print advertising where Pollay (1985) distinguishes between the artwork and the written copy, both of which can call attention to, assert and display (different) values. This led to the decision that values were recorded in a two-step procedure, namely coding the values of the (spoken or written) message of the commercial and coding the values of the storyline represented in the commercial.

Around twenty percent of the sample ($N = 453$) was coded twice to provide a test of reliability (see Table 2). Reliability was measured for each variable used in this analysis, using Holsti’s percentage agreement (Neuendorf, 2002, p.149) as well as Krippendorff’s alpha (2004). All the variables indicated an acceptable level of agreement (Krippendorff’s alpha between .67 and .99), and for some (e.g. type of commercials, social roles) there was a large discrepancy between the Holsti percentages and the value of Krippendorff’s alpha. However, this discrepancy was always due to an unequal distribution in the crosstable (Schafraad, 2009, p.47), and therefore the variables were allowed to be used in the analysis.

Results

The results will be presented in four different sections, focusing on the demography of main characters first, then the represented life domains, thirdly the represented problems and ideals and finally the represented values in the commercials.

Demography

Table 3 presents the distribution of the different demographic characteristics of main characters that were recorded; only the demographic characteristics which changed significantly over time are reported.

Gender had the coding options of ‘male’, ‘female’, ‘male animal, machine or creature’, and ‘female animal, machine or creature’, and in the results only the first two categories are used. Male main characters outnumber female main characters overall (56.2% - 43.8%) and in each decade, and there is a significant decrease of the number of female main characters over the decades ($\chi^2 = 7.55$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). Moving from a near 50-50 distribution in 1980 (52.9%-47.1%) to a near 60-40 distribution in 2005 (62.6%-37.45). The proportion of female main

Table 2 Overview of variables in the codebook

Definition		Coding categories	Reliability (Holsti/Alpha)
General characteristics			
Year	Year of broadcast	'1980', '1995', or '2005'	.99/.99
Story characteristics¹			
Life domain	<i>The domain of life in which the product or brand belonged or can be utilized.</i>	'Household', 'Personal appearance', 'Health', 'Finance', 'Leisure time', 'Media', 'Transportation', 'Food and nutrition', 'Living, design and home improvement', 'Beliefs', and 'Other'.	.87/.85
Values	- Value communicated in the literal message of the commercial. - Value communicated in the narration of the commercial	Value message: 'Functionality', 'Beauty', 'Health', 'Joy of living', 'Individuality' and 'Solidarity' Value narration: 'Functionality', 'Beauty', 'Health', 'Joy of living', 'Individuality' and 'Solidarity'	.81/.61* .77/.64*
Demographic characteristics²			
Gender main character	<i>Gender is based on the appearance of the biological body</i>	'Male', 'Female', 'Male nonhuman (e.g. animated)', 'female nonhuman' or 'unable to determine'	.90/.82
Gender voice-over	<i>What is the gender of the voice-over? That is the primary narrator who is heard in the commercial.</i>	'Male', 'Female'.	.98/.95
Age	<i>The life phase the main character represents</i>	'Child (0-12)', 'Teenager (13-18)', 'Young adult (19-35)', 'Adult (36-64)', or 'Elderly (65+)'	.76/.62*
Ethnicity	<i>Ethnicity is based on biological physical characteristics such as skin color, shape of the eyes and cultural characteristics such as clothing, name and accent.</i>	'White/European', 'Black', 'Asian', 'Mediterranean Africa/Asia', 'Mediterranean Europe', and 'Hispanic – South-America'	.96/.76
Professional role	<i>Is the main character portrayed as a professional – in a working environment?</i>	'Yes', 'No'	.95/.68*

¹Based on: Bresnahan et al., 2001; Furnham & Mak 1999; Ganahl et al., 2003; Luyt, 2011; Paek et al., 2011; ²Based on: Emons, 2011; Koeman, Peeters & D'Haenens, 2007; Scharrer et al., 2006

characters decreased between 1980 and 2005, $F(2, 1037) = 3.795$; $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = .007$ – moving from 47.1% in 1980, to 45.9% in 1995, down to 37.4% in 2005. Furthermore, contrast analyses revealed that the proportion of female main characters did not significantly change between 1980 ($M = 1.471$, $SE = .025$) and 1995 ($M = 1.459$, $SE = 0.027$), or 1995 ($M = 1.459$, $SE = 0.027$) and 2005 ($M = 1.374$, $SE = 0.028$), but the proportion of female main characters significantly decreased ($p = .027$) in the overall period between 1980 ($M = 1.471$, $SE = .025$) and 2005 ($M = 1.374$, $SE = 0.028$).

The representation of female characters has moved further away from reality in 2005, because the real life distribution of gender in the Netherlands is 50.5% females and 49.5% males (Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek [CBS], 2010). It seems that the degree of underrepresentation of female main characters has increased instead of decreased. The underrepresentation of female main characters over time was also present in other research; in some the amount of underrepresentation was even starker than in this study (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Allan & Coltrane, 1996; Koeman, 2007).

In contrast with the gender distribution of main characters, for the gender distribution of the voice-over while male voice outnumbered female voices overall (74.8% -25.2%) and in each decade there was a significant increase in the number of female voices, moving from 17.3% in 1980 to 37.2% in 2005 ($\chi^2 = 68.578$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$). Further examinations revealed, that the proportion of female voice-overs steadily and significantly increased over time, $F(2, 1666) = 35.694$; $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = .041$ – moving from 17.3% in 1980, to 20.4% in 1995, to a high of 37.2% in 2005. Furthermore, contrast analyses revealed that the proportion of female voice-overs did not significantly change between 1980 ($M = 1.173$, $SE = .018$) and 1995 ($M = 1.204$, $SE = .018$), but the proportion of female voice-overs did significantly increase ($p < .001$) in the period between 1995 ($M = 1.204$, $SE = .018$) and 2005 ($M = 1.372$, $SE = .018$) and in the overall period between 1980 ($M = 1.173$, $SE = .018$) and 2005 ($M = 1.372$, $SE = .018$). The percentage of female voice-overs has more than doubled in the 25 year period. Even though there has been a significant increase, there is still a continuous underrepresentation of female voice-overs in Dutch commercials; these results are comparable to the findings in previous research from different countries over time (Bartsch, Burnett, Diller, Rankin-Williams, 2000, p.739; Furnham & Mak, 1999, p.420-423).

For the professional role that were recorded, there was a significant increase in the number of females that were represented in a professional role ($\chi^2 = 11.083$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.01$). Further examination revealed that females represented in a professional working role showed an increase over time: increase from 10.8% in 1980, to 27.6% in 1995 and 33.3% in 2005, $F(2, 219) = 5.754$; $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = .050$. Contrast analyses revealed that the proportion of female characters in a professional role significantly increased ($p = 0.039$) in the period between 1980

($M = 1.108$, $SE = .049$) and 1995 ($M = 1.276$, $SE = 0.048$), and in the overall period ($p = 0.004$) between 1980 ($M = 1.108$, $SE = .049$) and 2005 ($M = 1.333$, $SE = .049$). The proportion of females in the professional role did not significantly change between 1995 ($M = 1.276$, $SE = .048$) and 2005 ($M = 1.333$, $SE = .049$). Males still greatly outnumber the females, overall and in each decade, in the professional role, but the number of women that were represented in this role tripled in the period from 1980 to 2005. These findings are comparable with other international research over time (Furnham & Mak, 1999).

Table 3 Main characters in television commercials

	1980	1995	2005	Total
	N = 393	N = 329	N = 318	N = 1040
Main character *	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Male	52.9	54.1	62.6	56.2
Female	47.1	45.9	37.4	43.8
Voice-over ***	N = 550	N = 543	N = 576	N = 1669
Male	82.7	79.6	62.8	74.8
Female	17.3	20.4	37.2	25.2
Social role: Professional **	N = 74	N = 76	N = 72	N = 222
Male	89.2	72.4	66.7	76.1
Female	10.8	27.6	33.3	23.9
Age **	N = 395	N = 326	N = 321	N = 1042
Young (<18)	15.2	12.0	10.0	12.6
Middle (19-64)	78.2	80.7	87.9	82.0
Elderly (65>)	6.6	7.3	2.1	5.4
Ethnicity *	N = 394	N = 327	N = 324	N = 1045
Caucasian	96.2	91.7	91.7	93.4
Other	3.8	8.3	8.3	6.6

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

The other demographic characteristics recorded for the main characters were age and ethnicity, and much like in previous research the results of the present study also show that there is a large skewedness in the representation of age and race in Dutch television commercials (Koeman, 2007; Mastro & Stern, 2003; Peterson & Ross, 1997; Van Selin, Westerhof & de Vos, 2007).

Age of the main character was coded in this study in the following categories: 0-12 (child), 13-18 (adolescent/teenager), 19-35 (young adult), 36-64 (adult), 65 and up (senior). For the age of the main characters the overall results show that there is an overrepresentation of characters in the middle age category (82%), while the

young (12.6%) and especially the elderly category (5.4%) are underrepresented. This underrepresentation of the young and the elderly has even significantly increased in the period from 1980 to 2005 ($\chi^2 = 15.451$; $df = 4$; $p < 0.01$). The distribution of age over the different categories in the Dutch television commercials is unrealistic, in reality the young category makes up 24.5% (instead of 12.6%) of the population, the middle category 61.5% (instead of 82%) and the elderly make for 14% (instead of 5.4%) of the Dutch population in 2005 (CBS, 2010).

Ethnicity of the main character had the following coding categories in this study: 'White/European', 'Black', 'Asian', 'Mediterranean Africa/Asia', 'Mediterranean Europe', and 'Hispanic – South-America'. The ethnicity of the main characters in the television commercial world has changed very little from 1980 to 2005, and overall there is a stark overrepresentation of the Caucasian ethnicity (93.4% of all main characters). The category of Other (or non-Caucasian) in ethnicity of the main character was a combination of the different ethnic categories that were recorded, this new category was created because the percentages in the different ethnic categories were so small. There has been a significant increase in characters of a non-Caucasian ethnicity, from 3.8% in 1980 to 8.3% in 1995 and 2005 ($\chi^2 = 8.018$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). A closer examination reveals that the proportion of non-Caucasians steadily and significantly increased over time, $F(2, 1045) = 4.028$; $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = .008$ – moving from 3.6% in 1980, to 8.4% in 1995, to 8.3% in 2005. Contrast analyses revealed that the proportion of main characters in commercials with a non-Caucasian ethnicity significantly increased ($p = 0.044$) between 1980 ($M = 1.038$, $SE = .012$) and 1995 ($M = 1.083$, $SE = .014$), as well as between 1980 and 2005 ($M = 1.083$, $SE = .014$) ($p = 0.040$). No significant increase occurred between 1995 and 2005. This increase however still hasn't matched the ethnic make-up of the Netherlands in reality, where a much more diverse ethnic palette is present. Even though the CBS (Dutch census bureau) doesn't have perfectly comparable data to match with the ethnic make-up of the television world, it is easily pinpointed that at least 10 percent of the Dutch population is non-Caucasian in 2005 (CBS, 2010). The real percentage is probably much higher because this percentage only includes the Dutch people of a non-western ethnic background, where for example people with an Asian ethnicity should also be included in the non-Caucasian group to make the data more comparable.

In sum, the demography of Dutch television commercials shows an overrepresentation of male main characters and voice-overs, of main character with a Caucasian ethnicity as well as a severe underrepresentation of the young and elderly as main characters. In other words, overall and in each examined decade, the demography of Dutch television commercials is not a reflection of demographic proportions in Dutch society, nor does it reflect societal changes such as the graying of and the increasing ethnic diversity of Dutch society.

Life domains

In Table 4 the presence of the various life domains in the Dutch television commercials of 1980, 1995 and 2005 are presented.

The three most dominant life domains represented in commercials in 1980 were 1: 'food and nutrition' (40,3%), 2: 'leisure time' (13,5%), 3: 'household' (10,8%), for 1995 the ranking was 1: 'food and nutrition' (25,9%), 2: 'leisure time' (14,7%), 3: 'personal appearance – beauty' (14,2%), and in 2005 the three most dominant domains were 1: 'food and nutrition' (19,0%), 2: 'personal appearance – beauty' (14,0%), 3: 'leisure time' (12,8%).

Household lost its central importance and decreased significantly in the period from 1980 to 1995 ($\chi^2 = 9.862$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.01$), while personal appearance – beauty gained significant importance ($\chi^2 = 7.618$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). Even though the amount of commercials focused on the domain of 'food and nutrition' decreased significantly in the period 1980-2005 from 40,3 to 19,0 percent it remains the most dominant life domain represented in Dutch television commercials ($\chi^2 = 74.039$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$). The dominance of 'food and nutrition' as a life domain in commercials as well as the downward trend in frequencies can also be found when comparing other international studies over time (Byrd-Bredbenner & Grasso, 2000a; Byrd-Bredbenner & Grasso, 2000b; Hetsroni & Asya, 2002; Story & Faulkner, 1990). The domain of 'leisure time' showed no significant difference over time, but still remained among the top three most represented life domains ($\chi^2 = 0.982$ $df = 2$; $p = ns$).

Furthermore, the number of commercials focused on the domain of 'health' ($\chi^2 = 16.241$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$), 'finance' ($\chi^2 = 35.861$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$), and 'transportation' ($\chi^2 = 7.177$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$) more than doubled in the period from 1980-2005. The presence of 'media' as a life domain tripled in the examined period ($\chi^2 = 19.860$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$), going from 3, 5 percent in 1980, to 9,0 percent in 1995 and 9,4 percent in 2005. This growing presence of media as a dominant life domain from 1995 onward is easily linked to the growing landscape of media-applications and outlets such as the growth in television channels, the emergence of the internet and game-culture. The increase in the domain of 'beliefs' the largest, going from 0,5 percent in 1980, to 4,4 percent in 1995 and finally to 5,7 percent in 2005 ($\chi^2 = 27.160$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$). This large increase can partially be explained by the growth of the number of noncommercial television commercials (e.g. public service advertising and civil society campaigns), often focused on a belief in a better world and the idea of social change, which went from 0,9 percent of the studied commercials in 1980 to 4,1 percent in 2005. The domains of 'sport' ($\chi^2 = 8.977$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$) and 'social relations' ($\chi^2 = 13.988$, $df = 2$; $p < 0.01$) both had a peak in the amount of commercials that were focused on said domains in 1995, but still grew slightly but significantly in the overall period.

Table 4 Representation of life domains in the 1980-2005 period

	1980	1995	2005	Total
	N = 623 (%)	N = 634 (%)	N = 649 (%)	N = 1906 (%)
<i>Life domain</i>				
Food and nutrition ***	40.3	25.9	19.0	28.2
Leisure time	13.5	14.7	12.8	13.6
Personal appearance (i.e. beauty) *	9.6	14.2	14.0	12.6
Household **	10.8	9.5	6.0	8.7
Health ***	2.1	1.7	5.2	3.0
Finance ***	4.7	3.6	11.2	6.6
Sport *	0.2	1.7	0.8	0.9
Media ***	3.5	9.0	9.4	7.3
Social relations **	0.0	2.4	1.5	1.3
Transportation *	3.7	6.0	7.1	5.6
Living, design and home-improvement ***	10.3	5.2	5.1	6.8
Beliefs ***	0.5	4.4	5.7	3.6
Education	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.3
Work	1.0	1.3	1.7	1.3

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

The number of commercials focused on the domain of 'living, design and home-improvement' was cut in half in between 1980 and 1995 and then remained stagnant in the period from 1995 to 2005 ($\chi^2 = 17.364$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$). There was no significant difference over time in the representation of the domains of 'education' ($\chi^2 = 2.924$; $df = 2$; $p = ns$) and 'work' ($\chi^2 = 1.333$; $df = 2$; $p = ns$).

Overall, the most dominant life domains in the present study are food and nutrition, leisure time and personal appearance (i.e. beauty). An important side-note to these results is that the overall distribution of demographic characteristics (see Table 3) did not vary significantly over the different life domains, except for gender.

There is a distinct bias present in the distribution of gender in specific life domains, when compared to the overall distribution of gender (56.2% males – 43.8% females, Table 3). As presented in Table 3, there is a significant overrepresentation of female main characters in the two stereotypically feminine domains, namely personal appearance ($\chi^2 = 58.365$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$) and household ($\chi^2 = 9.672$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$) and there is an even greater overrepresentation of male

main characters in the domains of finance ($\chi^2 = 15.493$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$), work (Fisher's Exact Test = 5.04; $p < 0.05$), living, design and home-improvement ($\chi^2 = 9.026$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$) and transportation ($\chi^2 = 13.440$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$).

Table 5 Gender distribution that differs from overall distribution in specific life-domains

	Finance***	Work*	LDH ^a **	TP ^a ***	HH ^a **	PA ^a ***	Media
	N = 60 (%)	N = 17 (%)	N = 67 (%)	N = 54 (%)	N = 88 (%)	N = 165 (%)	-
Main characters							
Male	80	82.4	73.1	79.6	39.8	28.5	-
Female	20	17.6	26.9	20.4	60.2	71.5	-
Voice-overs	N = 104	-	-	N = 85	N = 145	N = 231	N = 133
Male	85.6	-	-	87.1	65.5	59.3	82.7
Female	14.4	-	-	12.9	34.5	40.7	12.9

^a LDH = Living, design and home-improvement, TP = transportation, HH = household, PA = personal appearance (i.e. beauty)

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Furthermore, the bias becomes even more pronounced in light of the fact that general overrepresentation of male voice-overs (see Table 3) is more severe in the domains of finance ($\chi^2 = 6.613$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$), media ($\chi^2 = 4.572$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$) and transportation ($\chi^2 = 6.941$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$). Finally, the stereotypically feminine domains of household ($\chi^2 = 7.663$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$) and personal appearance ($\chi^2 = 35.451$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$) also present an overrepresentation of male voice-overs but this is far less pronounced than the overall overrepresentation (74.8% male -25.2% female) as reported in Table 3.

Values

The coding options for values in this study were: 'functionality', 'beauty', 'health', 'joy of living', 'individuality' and 'solidarity'. These values are actually value labels that encompass a cluster of sub-values, because otherwise the number of values became too large. For example the value 'functionality' encompasses sub-values as efficiency, quality, durability, safety and price while the value 'beauty' encompasses sub-values such as youthfulness, attractiveness and fairness (Table 6).

The most dominant value over time in the message of the commercial as well as the narration of the commercial is functionality. Even though its

prominence as a value, in both the message ($\chi^2 = 15.836$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$) and the narration ($\chi^2 = 7.604$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$) of the commercial, significantly decreases in the examined time period it remains the value that is represented the most in each decade. The prevalence of functionality, which can be seen as a utilitarian value (a value of function) was also reported in other studies (Bing Zhang & Harwood, 2004; Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Hetsroni & Asya, 2002; Pollay, 1983). It seems that for advertisers the most important message of a commercial is that a product does what it is intended to do; other values are seemingly still secondary to this goal.

Table 6 Represented values in the 1980-2005 period

	1980	1995	2005	Total
	N = 639 (%)	N = 638 (%)	N = 679 (%)	N = 1956 (%)
Values message				
Functionality ***	70.6	63.8	60.2	64.8
Joy of Living	17.2	15.4	15.2	15.9
Health **	5.6	5.3	9.3	6.8
Beauty	4.2	4.4	6.0	4.9
Individuality***	2.0	9.1	4.6	5.2
Solidarity***	0.3	2.0	4.7	2.4
Values narration	N = 639	N = 638	N = 679	N = 1956
Functionality *	53.5	48.3	46.1	49.2
Joy of living *	34.1	30.6	27.2	30.6
Health *	4.9	5.3	8.1	6.1
Beauty	5.0	5.6	6.9	5.9
Individuality ***	2.2	7.8	6.5	5.5
Solidarity ***	0.3	2.3	5.2	2.7

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Joy of living is the second most dominant value, in the message ($\chi^2 = 1.236$; $df = 2$; $p = ns$) where it doesn't change significantly in the examined period as well as the narration ($\chi^2 = 7.317$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$), where it decreases significantly in the examined time period. Other studies also report a strong presence of joy of living (i.e. happiness/joy) in the value-spectrum in commercials (Hetsroni & Aysa, 2002; Koeman, 2007). Health is the third most dominant value in the message ($\chi^2 = 10.130$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.01$) of commercials in 1980 and 2005. In 1995 the third most dominant value in the message is individuality ($\chi^2 = 33.048$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$),

which shows an unusual increase in that year and an overall significant growth in the examined period. For the narration the third most dominant value changes for each examined year, from beauty in 1980 ($\chi^2 = 2.288$; $df = 2$; $p = ns$), to individuality in 1995 ($\chi^2 = 21.244$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$) and health in 2005 ($\chi^2 = 7.141$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). It seems that the two most important values, functionality and joy of living, are relatively stable in their position over time in the message of the commercial as well as the narration.

Other noteworthy results are the non-significant growth of beauty as a value in the message ($\chi^2 = 2.288$; $df = 2$; $p = ns$) as well as narration ($\chi^2 = 2.288$; $df = 2$; $p = ns$), which doesn't echo the significant growth of personal appearance as a life domain and as a category of represented problems and ideals.

Remarkably, solidarity as a value shows significant growth, from 0.3 percent in 1980 to 4.7 percent in 2005, within the message ($\chi^2 = 27.713$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$) and from 0.3 percent in 1980 to 5.2 percent in 2005 as a value in the narration of the commercials ($\chi^2 = 30.208$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.001$). As mentioned before with the significant increase of beliefs as a life domain, this increase might be related to the increase in the number of noncommercial television commercials (e.g. public service advertising and civil society campaigns) which went from 0.9 percent of the studied commercials in 1980 to 4.1 percent in 2005.

Overall, over two thirds of the messages in commercials on Dutch television are focused on the value of functionality. Functionality together with the values joy of living and health make up for the majority of the values present in the message of Dutch television commercial. The same can be said for the values present in the narration, although the dominance of functionality is tempered much more by joy of living as a value.

Finally, for the recorded values in the sample the distribution of the overall demographic proportions didn't vary significantly from those presented in Table 3, except for the gender distribution for some values which are presented in Table 7.

For the value of beauty in the message ($\chi^2 = 41.534$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$) as well as the narration ($\chi^2 = 44.388$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$) women outnumbered men, these results are very much in tandem with the overrepresentation of female main characters in this life domain (Table 4) of personal appearance. For the value of health in the message female main characters also outnumber men ($\chi^2 = 9.602$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$), while the overrepresentation of male main characters is more severe than in the overall distribution (56.2% males - 43.8% females) for the values of functionality ($\chi^2 = 11.552$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$) and individuality ($\chi^2 = 5.585$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$) in the message and functionality ($\chi^2 = 6.553$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$) and individuality ($\chi^2 = 13.937$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$) in the narration.

Table 7 Gender distribution that differs from overall distribution for specific values

Values message	Beauty ***	Health**	Functionality**	Individuality*
	N = 66 (%)	N = 66 (%)	N = 662 (%)	N = 56 (%)
Main characters				
Male	18.2	37.9	60.1	71.4
Female	81.8	62.1	39.9	28.6
	Beauty***	Health*	Joy***	
Voice-overs	N = 91	N = 120	N = 273	
Male	46.2	65.8	85.0	
Female	53.8	34.2	15.0	
Values narration	Beauty***	Functionality*	Individuality***	
Main characters	N = 76	N = 453	N = 68	
Male	19.7	60.7	77.9	
Female	80.3	39.9	22.1	
	Beauty***	Functionality*		
Voice-overs	N = 109	N = 825		
Male	50.5	77.5		
Female	49.5	22.5		

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

With regard to the gender distribution in voice-overs female voices outnumber male voices when it comes to the value of beauty in the message ($\chi^2 = 42.350$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$), for the value of health in the message ($\chi^2 = 5.648$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$) and beauty in the narration ($\chi^2 = 37.105$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.001$) male voices outnumber female voices but to a much less degree than in the overall distribution (74.8% male-25.2% female). For the values joy of living in the message ($\chi^2 = 17.679$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$) and functionality in the narration ($\chi^2 = 5.644$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$) the overrepresentation of male voices is more pronounced than in the overall distribution.

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore and chart the demography and other structural forms of cultural meaning present in Dutch commercials in the time period 1980-2005, ranging from the demography, to the life domains and values

it focused on. Hereby uncovering the different layers of meaning in the content of a television commercial, and how it relates to Dutch society and culture.

The first research question was: *Who inhabits the world of Dutch television commercials?* The world of Dutch television commercials is over-populated with male characters; they outnumber female characters overall and in each decade. This is similar to the results in previous international studies, where some even reported an even larger underrepresentation of women (e.g. Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Koeman, 2007). The underrepresentation of female main characters has also grown instead of decreased over time. This goes against expectation of a trend towards a more equal representation over time, as a result of the women's movements efforts since the 1960s to gain unequivocal equality for women. The findings are therefore somewhat surprising and indicate that the television commercial world is not keeping up with the changing status of women in society. This trend is also contrary to the general trend reported in earlier research where over time slowly but surely a growing and more representative proportion of female main characters was reported (e.g. Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Bartsch, Burnett, Diller, Rankin-Williams, 2000; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000). In other words, Dutch television commercials suffer from a cultural lag when it comes to the representation of women.

However within the realm of gender the results are not as straightforward as it seems when it comes to the main characters, because women have been gaining a better foothold in the world of television commercials in the studied period when it comes to their share of voice-overs and their share of professional roles. Even though they are nowhere near equal representation in these roles, much like main characters, there is a positive trend over the studied decades. These increases are surprising in a number of ways. First, the increase of women's voices in voice-overs is interesting because as many previous studies have noted the male voice was equated with authority, reason and knowledge and therefore seen as a better motivator for buying than a female voice (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Lovdal, 1989). The fact that women have gained ground in the fictional workplace is also surprising because this field is stereotypically male-character-dominated (Furnham & Farragher, 2000; Lovdal, 1989). Maybe through this slowly increasing presence in parts that were stereotypically male-oriented, the women's movements efforts are gaining ground. It seems that within the realm of gender there is progress as well as stagnation on the path to truly equal representation of the genders.

On the other hand there has been no real progress in the representation of age and ethnicity in the world of television commercials. It is still a world wherein there is an underrepresentation of both the young and the old and where the ethnic make-up is mostly white. Where in reality the Netherlands is a country

that has been graying significantly over the last decades, in contrast the results of the present study show a significant decrease in the number of elderly people as main characters over time. Furthermore the amount of non-Caucasian characters has increased somewhat in the studied period; it is nowhere near a reflection of the ethnic variety that is present in the Netherlands.

It seems that when it comes to the demography in the world of television commercials the Netherlands is not that different from the television world in general or, other countries that studied this demography. Because research from various countries and various decades concludes that men outnumber women as characters and remain stereotypically associated with knowledge through their overrepresentation in voice-overs, Caucasians outnumber all other ethnicities combined and the old and really young don't really exist or matter in the world of television commercials (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Furham & Mak, 1999; Ganahl, Prinsen & Netzley, 2003; Koeman, 2007; Lovdal, 1989; Mastro & Stern, 2003; Peterson & Ross, 1997; Van Selm, Westerhof & de Vos, 2007).

The second research question in this study was: *Which selection of life domains is represented in the world of Dutch television commercials?* Overall, more than 50 percent of all the analyzed commercials were focused on only three different life domains, namely 'food and nutrition', 'leisure time' and 'personal appearance- beauty'. The other half of the studied commercials was spread out over the other eleven life domains. This means that from a consumerist point of view these are the most important and or most profitable life domains in our culture. The dominance of 'food and nutrition' makes sense because food is and will always remain a fundamental human and as a result commercial need. The unchanging focus of Dutch commercials on the domain of leisure time is easily connected to the large amount of free time people have in the Netherlands in general and when compared to other countries. It is even dubbed "the king of leisure time" (Buiters, et al., 2005, p.4-5). The commercials focused on this domain are a springboard for "selling" various ways one might spend all this free time and what might be bought during it. Personal appearance is the third most dominant life domain, which has gained significant moment especially since 1995. The growing importance of personal appearance (i.e. beauty) is also reflected in their growing presence as a category of represented problems and ideals. This prominence can be linked to the growing market for personal beautification in our society, marked by the increase in the amount as well as usage of beauty products and the growing market for cosmetic surgery (Kuczynski, 2007). We live in a society that places such a high premium on beauty, where beauty once served a biological purpose of continuing the species by tracking mateability in contemporary society it's a form of "social capital" (Bourdieu, 1986). And even though there is more to beauty than meets the eye,

from a consumerist perspective it seems there are always more products and services to sell to keep this social capital flowing.

The third research question was: *Which values are represented in the world of Dutch television commercials?* Values were analyzed as a part of the message that was conveyed by television commercials. Values are what is at the heart of the message of television commercials; it is simultaneously the most abstract and the most essential part of the television commercials message (Pollay, 1985). In this study more than two thirds of all messages of television commercials focused on the value of functionality, and about half of the narrations in the studied television commercials focused on functionality as a value. Functionality combined with joy of living make up more than 75 percent of the values represented in the message as well as the narration of all the studied commercials. The prominence of functionality as a value in both the message and the narration of television commercials can be linked to the commercials first-order function, which is persuasion. Functionality embodies the practical aspect of products, namely that it's a newer version, or that it's more durable, or more efficient, in essence that it's better than others or than a previous model, which is still largely the rhetoric commercials use to sell and emphasize the value of their products. It seems that advertisers still implement utilitarian values (in this study functionality) more often than other values, since they best communicate what it is that a product is supposed to do and a dominant presence of other values might interfere with that message (Bing Zhang & Harwood, 2004, p.160).

The dominant presence of joy of living as a value in both the message and the narration of commercials can be connected to the marketing strategy that through the products and services that are advertised you can better enjoy life and become a happier and more fulfilled person in life. The prominence of joy of living (i.e. happiness in life) is also reflected in other studies that examined the values present in commercials (Hetsroni & Asya, 2002; Koeman, 2007). These findings also point to the fact that having new products is still seen as a means toward a happier life in our society and as such ties in with the often articulated criticism of consumer society and the idea that goods are the prime means toward joy and happiness in life (Pollay, 1986, p.21).

The prominence of health as a value in the overall period in the message as well as narration of the commercials can be linked to the importance that is often attributed to health as a value by the Dutch population (de Jonge, 1997, p.81; Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau [SCP], 1994, p.503-504; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regereingsbeleid [WRR], 2003, p.52). The prominence of health as a value in commercials is also reflected in previous international research (Bing Zang & Harwood, 2004; Hetsroni & Asya, 2002; Koeman, 2007; Pollay & Gallagher, 1990).

In sum, the values most prominent in the message of the commercials are identical to the most prominent values in the narration of the commercial. Functionality, joy of living and health are the values most reflected in Dutch television commercials.

The general aim of this study was to shed light on the good life as represented through the lens of Dutch television commercials. On the one hand this study sought to connect with a well-established international research effort to chart the demography of the world of television commercials and fill a lacuna of knowledge for the Dutch situation in 1980, 1995 and 2005. On the other hand the study was geared at establishing a foundation of Dutch empirical evidence on the representation of life domains, problems, ideals and values to compare with theoretically held notions about the nature of television commercials and its relation with society (i.e. distorted mirror metaphor, Pollay, 1986).

Our findings in regard of the demography support the findings of previous national and international research and paint an overall picture of significant distortions over time in relation to the demographic statistics as they are present in Dutch society. Our findings also give body to the assertions that there is a certain amount of distortion, specificity or focus in the way aspects of society are represented (Pollay, 1986). Overall, more than half of the studied commercials are focused on three life domains (being food and nutrition, personal appearance and leisure time), more than half of the commercials are focused on three categories of problems and ideals (personal appearance, beauty and maintenance) and finally more than three quarters of values represented in the message as well as in the narration are divided over a set of two values (functionality and joy of living). This means that there is some truth to the notion that television commercials are like a distorting mirror or a looking glass (which enlarges and hereby emphasizes certain aspects, while others fall out of sight) when it comes to Dutch society.

However, the most important lesson or most illuminating aspect that might be learned from these results didn't come from the values which were mostly marketing-fuelled, but from the distinctive gender bias that became apparent upon further examination. Aside from the fact that the world of television commercials did not reflect demographic proportions in society at all, for gender a sort of double-edged sword revealed itself. Overall, women are underrepresented, but those main female characters and female voice-overs that are present get a disproportionate amount of roles in commercials that are focused on the life domain as well as values of personal appearance or beauty. While male characters and voice-overs were an even greater presence in the more "serious" life domains and values related to knowledge, finance, work and functionality. All in all, in the

realm of Dutch television commercials men are still stereotypically linked to knowledge and capability and women to beauty, signaling that men have a more important status and function in Dutch society than women do.

Further research is necessary to bring more specificity to the measurement of the representation of life domains, problems and ideals. A cross-cultural and longitudinal approach into the topic of society as represented in television commercials (in stead of only values) might also be illuminating in the context of globalization and its possible influences on this representation.

References

- Allen, K. & Coltrane, S. (1996). Gender Displaying Television Commercials: A Comparative Study of Television Commercials in the 1950s and 1980s. *Sex Roles*, 35 (3/4), 185-203.
- Bartsch, R.A., Burnett, T., Diller, T.R. & Rankin-Williams, E. (2000). Gender Representation in Television Commercials: Updating an Update. *Sex Roles*, 43 (9/10), 735-743.
- Berger, A.A. (2000). *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture: Advertising's Impact on American Character and Society*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bing Zhang, Y. & Harwood, J. (2004). Modernization and Tradition in an Age of Globalization: Cultural Values in Chinese Television Commercials. *Journal of Communication*, 54 (1), 156-172.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. J.G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood
- Bretl, D. J. & Cantor, J. (1988). The Portrayal of Men and Women in U.S. Television Commercials: A Recent Content Analysis and Trends over 15 Years. *Sex Roles*, 18 (9/10), 595-609.
- Buiter, W.H., Eiffinger, S.C.W., Koedijk, C.G., Teulings, C.N., van Witteloostuijn, A. & van Dalen, H.P. (2006). *Miljoenennota 2006 (Nota over de toestand van 's Rijks Financien): De noodzaak van grondslagverbreding in het Nederlandse belastingstelsel*. Consulted on 22-10-2010, via <http://rijksbegroting.minfin.nl/2006/kamerstukken,2005/10/4/kst89973.html>
- Byrd-Bredbenner, C. & Grasso, D. (2000a). Health, Medicine, and Food Messages in Television Commercials during 1992 and 1998. *Journal of School Health*, 70(2), 61-65.
- Byrd-Bredbenner, C. & Grasso, D. (2000b). What Is Television Trying to Make Children Swallow?: Content Analysis of the Nutrition Information in Prime-time Advertisements. *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 32(4), 187-195.
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2010). Bevolking. Consulted on 18-10-2010, via <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/bevolking/cijfers/default.htm>
- Cheng, H. & Schweitzer, J.C. (1996). Cultural values reflected in Chinese and U.S. television commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36, 27-45.
- Coltrane, S. & Messineo, M. (2000). The Perpetuation of Subtle Prejudice: Race and Gender Imagery in 1990s Television Advertising. *Sex Roles*, 42 (5/6), 363-389.
- De Jonge, J.W. (1997). *Gezondheidskunde*. Houten: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum
- De Mooij, M. (1998). *Global Marketing and Advertising: Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Downs, A. C. & Harrison, S. K. (1985). Embarrassing Age Spots or Just Plain Ugly? Physical Attractiveness Stereotyping as an Instrument of Sexism on American Television Commercials. *Sex Roles*, 13 (1/2), 9-19.
- Fowles, J. (1996). *Advertising and Popular Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Furnham, A., & Mak, T. (1999). Sex-Role Stereotyping in Television Commercials: A Review and Comparison of Fourteen Studies Done on Five Continents Over 25 Years. *Sex Roles*, 41 (5/6), 413-437.
- Furnham, A. & Farragher, E. (2000). A Cross-Cultural Content Analysis of Sex-Role Stereotyping in Television Advertisements: A Comparison between Great Britain and New Zealand. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 44(3), 415-436.
- Ganahl, D.J., Prinsen, T.J., & Netzley, S.B. (2003). A Content Analysis of Prime Time Commercials: A Contextual Framework of Gender Representation. *Sex Roles*, 49 (9/10), 545-551.
- Gerbner, G. (1995). Casting and fate. Women and minorities on television drama, game shows and news. In E. Hollander, P. Rutten & L. van der Linden (Eds.), *Communication, culture & community. Liber amicorum James Stappers* (pp.125-137). Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum.
- Gerbner, G. (1998). Stories of Violence and the Public Interest. In K. Brants, J. Hermes & L. van Zoonen (Eds.), *The Media in Question* (pp.135-146). London: Sage.
- Gerbner, G. (1999). The stories we tell. *Peace Review*, 11 (1), 9-15.
- Gerbner, G. (2002). Cultural Indicators: the Third Voice. In M.Morgan (Ed.), *Against the Mainstream: The selected works of George Gerbner* (pp.175-192). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., Signorielli, N., & Shanahan, J. (2002). Growing up with television: cultivation processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media Effects. Advances in theory and research* (pp. 43-67). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gerbner, G. (2005). *George Gerbner Series*. Consulted on 3-3-2006, via <http://www.mediaed.org/videos/CommercialismPoliticsAndMedia/TheKillingScreens/studyguide/html>
- Hetsroni, A. & Asya, I. (2002). A comparison of values in infomercials and commercials. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 7(1), 34-45.
- Koeman, J. (2007). Cultural values in commercials: Reaching and representing the multicultural market. *Communications*, 32, 223-253.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks / London: Sage Publications.
- Kuczynski, A. (2007). *Beauty Junkies: Under the skin of the cosmetic surgery industry*. London: Vermilion.
- Langenberg, H. & van den Bergen, D. (2008). *Helfft economische groei 1995-2007 door toename productiviteit*. Consulted on 20-10-2010, via <http://www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/80B3892A-6433-47F5-9BE9-E42BEEFF487/o/2009k2v4p53.pdf>
- Leiss, W., Kline, S. & Jhally, S. (1990). *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of well-being* (2nd ed.). London/New York: Routledge.
- Lovdal, L.T. (1989). Sex Role Messages in Television Commercials: An Update. *Sex Roles*, 21(11/12), 715-724.
- Mastro, D. E. & Stern, S. R. (2003). Representations of Race in Television Commercials: A Content Analysis of Prime-Time Advertising. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 47 (4), 638-647.
- McArthur, L.Z., & Resko, B.G. (1975). The portrayal of men and women in American television commercials. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 97, 209-220.
- Morgan, M. (2007). What do young people learn about the world from watching television? In S.R. Mazzarella (Ed.), *20 Questions about Youth & the Media* (pp.153-166). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Mueller, B. (1987). Reflections of culture: An analysis of Japanese and American advertising appeals. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 27, 51-59.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Peterson, R. T. & Ross, D. T. (1997). A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Mature Individuals in Television Commercials. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16, 425-433.
- Pollay, R.W. (1983). Measuring the cultural values manifest in advertising. In J.H. Leigh & C.R. Martin (Eds.), *Current issues and research in advertising* (pp. 71-91). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Graduate School Of Bussiness Division Research.
- Pollay, R.W. (1985). American Advertising and Societal Values during the twentieth Century. In C.T. Tan & J.N. Sheth (Eds.), *Historical Perspectives in Consumer Research: National and International Perspectives* (pp.60-71). Singapore: Association for Consumer Research.
- Pollay, R.W. (1986). The Distorted Mirror: Reflections on Unintended Consequences of Advertising. *The Journal of Marketing*, 50 (2), 18-36.
- Pollay, R.W. & Gallagher, K. (1990). Advertising and Cultural Values: Reflections in the Distorted Mirror. *International Journal of Advertising*, 9, 359-372.
- Richins, M.L. (1987). Media, Materialism, and Human Hapiness. In M. Wallendorf & P. Anderson (Eds.), *Advances in Consumer Research* (pp.352-356). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.
- Rutledge Shields, V. (1997). Selling the Sex that Sells: Mapping the Evolution of Gender Advertising research Across Three Decades. In B.R. Burleson & A.W. Kunkel (Eds.), *Communication Yearbook 20* (pp.71-109). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Schafraad, P. (2009). *Controversial Outsiders: A Cross-National Study of Media Attention to the Far-Right 1986-2004*. Enschede: Ipskamp Drukkers.
- Van Selm, M., Westerhof, G.J. & Vos, B. (2007). Competent en veelzijdig: Representatie van ouderen in de Ster-reclame tien jaar later. *Tijdschrift voor Gerontologie en Geriatrie*, 38, 57-64.
- Signorielli, N. & Bacue, A. (1999). Recognition and Respect: A Content Analysis of Prime-Time Television Characters Across Three Decades. *Sex Roles*, 40(7/8), 527-544.
- Sociaal en Cultureel Plan Bureau. (1994). *Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport 1994*. Rijswijk: SCP.

- SPOT (2009). *Televisiereport 2009*. Consulted on 28-1-2010, via http://www.spot-interactive.nl/downloads/tv_jaarrapport_2009.pdf
- Story, M. & Faulkner, P. (1990). The Prime Time Diet: A Content Analysis of Eating Behavior and Food Messages in Television Program Content and Commercials. *American Journal Of Public Health*, 80(6), 738-740.
- Wolf, N. (1991). *The beauty myth : how images of beauty are used against women*. London: Vintage.
- Wernick, A. (1991). *Promotional Culture: Advertising, ideology and symbolic expression*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid. (2003). *Waarden, normen en de last van het gedrag*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

APPENDIX II

Codebook Morality and Television Fiction

Codebook Morality and Television Fiction

version 25, date: 11-2-2013

Originally in Dutch, used for study 4 and 5 in this dissertation

© Serena Daalmans

General Instruction

Introduction

This is the codebook which will be used to analyze fictional content broadcasted on Dutch prime time television, as a part of the larger ongoing PhD-project entitled *Television and Morality*. The codebook should be regarded as the instruction manual before coding as well as reference guide during the coding. The codebook consists of two parts: Recording Unit I focus on the aspects of morality represented in the content of the program, while Recording Unit II deals with aspects of the moral casting in the program.

The material

In this research project content analysis will be used to analyze the content of fictional television programs broadcast on Dutch prime time television in the years 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2010. *Fictional programs* are programs that portrays a fictional narrative, for example films, drama series, soaps and situation comedies. *Prime time programming* encompasses all programming broadcast between 19.00 and 23.00. The sample from 1985 consists of drama programs broadcast on two Dutch networks (Nederland 1 and 2) in a period of four weeks. Due to the increase in the number of Dutch television channels, the number of weeks included in the 1990, and 1995 to 2010 samples were reduced to, respectively, two and one week of fictional television programs

Before coding

You have been given a specific amount of fictional material, and all of you will code around 50 programs (including the material that is used for reliability analyses). Of all the material around 20 percent will be coded by two coders, in order to calculate reliabilities. If you are the primary coder of certain material, you are supposed to make a list of the names of the main characters in the order you coded them. The secondary coder will then use this list to maintain the same order in coding the main characters, solely for the material that is double-coded. If you are the secondary coder ask the primary coder for this list, before you start coding the material that is marked as double-coding material.

When coding, you will need the following

- The codebook
- The coding sheet
- A computer which can play video files
- The assigned coding materials (i.e. the television programs)
- Form to note the order of appearance of coded main characters

Instruction before coding

1. Read the entire codebook before watching the program
2. Start the program and carefully watch the fictional program from start to finish. Have pen and paper at hand to make notes about the storylines, characters and their behavior. Since the context-unit is one episode, you are only allowed to use the information that

- is presented in that episode. Background information which you have from watching previous or future episodes of the program cannot be used here! Information should be based on visuals and spoken dialogue in the program. Be sure to listen for the names of main characters, often they are not included in the subtitles, but you do need them in identifying and coding the main characters.
3. Start your coding by filling out Recording Unit I focused coding on aspects of the moral content of television fiction. Afterwards you will start coding the items in Recording Unit II, where you will code main characters and their characteristics. A reminder here, is that you need to note the order in which you code the main characters on the crib sheet for the second coder, with name and if a name is missing a description. This is to ensure that the secondary coder will keep the same order of characters.

Recording unit I: Moral content in fictional television programs

1. Program number

Record the predefined program number for this program

2. Year of broadcast

1. 1985
2. 1995
3. 2005
4. 2010

3. Title of the program

3.1 Origin of the program

Here you code where the program was created. You can discern this by looking at the end credits or based on the spoken language in the program. If the spoken language is respectively Dutch, American-English, British-English, German, French, and there are no other clues that the program might have been produced elsewhere, then code respectively: ‘The Netherlands’, ‘The United States’, ‘Great-Britain’, ‘Germany’, or ‘France’.

If the program appears to be a co-production (e.g. Germany-France) or if another country produced the program (e.g. Australia, Canada etc.) then you code ‘Other’. If the origin of the program is unknown or difficult to define, you will code ‘Unable to code’.

1. The Netherlands
2. U.S.
3. Germany
4. Great-Britain
5. France
6. Other
9. Unable to code

3.2 Content of the fictional program

Here you will code a typing of the content of the fictional program. If the program mixes fictional types/genres, for example a science-fiction and thriller, you will code ‘Other’.

1. (situation) comedy
2. soap
3. psychological drama
4. historical drama
5. detective, thriller
6. judicial drama
7. medical drama
8. horror
9. science fiction
10. fantasy, supernatural
11. action
12. western
13. sex
14. Other

Instruction: How to determine storylines

To determine the various story lines of the story and their main characters, you differentiate what and who a storyline is about. A storyline is a cycle of problems faced and resolutions created by a main character in a storyline. Main characters are characters that determine the course of events of a story line by means of their actions.

The main storyline is defined as the storyline that takes up most of the screen time, and/or has the most characters involved in the progression of the narrative arc, and/or shows the most complexity in the problem-resolutions (Weijers, 2014; Wester & Weijers, 2006). Each story line can be defined in terms of narrative cycles:

A: problem > B: choice > C: decision > A1: (new or change of) problem, etc. (for example: A: there is not enough proof to arrest the prime suspect of a murder > B: should I go by the book or force a confession > C: I force a confession > A1: the evidence is illegally obtained and cannot be used in a 1. court of law, etc.).

4. Describe the main/most important storyline in a few sentences

Most important, can be determined by looking at:

1. The time that is devoted to developing or furthering that storyline in the program
2. If it remains unclear: Discern how many characters are involved in the storyline (the more involved characters, the more important the storyline)
3. If it is still unclear: Discern the complexity of the storyline (the amount of plot-twist or entangled goals of characters etc.).

5. Name the (up to 8) main characters by name

Instruction: Main characters are characters that determine the course of events of a story line by means of their actions.

6. Moral community

The moral community is defined here as a group of individuals with its own set of (behavioral) rules, obligations and commitments that individuals are held accountable to. This community is able and allowed to judge the behavior of the main character in the storyline.

From the vantage point of which moral community are the main character judged for their behavior

- 1) *The traditional or parental communities*: These are communities based on blood and identity - ranging from the family unit, and other parental institutions such as the army, towards the more abstract (national) community.
 - 1.1 Family and important others
 - 1.2 Clan / religious community / ideological groups (i.e. mafia, or religious sects)
 - 1.3 The national community (large and small – village, city, The Netherlands, Europe or World)
 - 1.4 Other
- 2) *Institutional communities*: groups within the (democratic) organization of society in institutions.
 - 2.1 Justice
 - 2.2 Medicine
 - 2.3 Education
 - 2.4 Media
 - 2.5 Politics and government
 - 2.6 Other
- 3) *Market related communities*: communities based on reciprocated (self)interests with a focus on success and capitalist thrift and trust.
 - 3.1 Shop/ store / commercial enterprise
 - 3.2 Consumer organization
 - 3.3 Other
- 4) *Chosen, light communities*: communities based on individual choice of participation based on tastes and (romantic /friendly) relations.
 - 4.1 Romantic relationship
 - 4.2 Friends and peers
 - 4.3 Recreational organizations
 - 4.4 Other
- 5) *Other*

7. What is the domain that is central in the main storyline

In which area of everyday life does the main storyline unfold?

1. Family (including couples living together with or without children)
2. Law, order and justice

3. Politics
4. Health(care)
5. Culture, education and science
6. Economy, finance and business
7. Leisure (incl. romantic/friendship)
8. Other

8. Moral theme

The moral theme of a storyline is the topic or thematic focus of the storyline, characterized at a more abstract level. A theme can be shown, it can be talked about or it can be inferred in the story. A theme is often related to the central problems the main characters face.

What is the moral theme of the main storyline?

Instruction: code a specific moral theme if it is very clear, otherwise code it as a general problem in a specific thematic category.

1) *Issues and problems surrounding kinship & identity*

1. The battle between Good and Evil
2. Issues or problems with Marriage and (extended) family
3. Issues or problems with authority
4. Problems or issues connected to honor and shame
5. Other problems or issues relating to kinship & identity

2) *Issues and problems in organized society*

1. Issues or problems regarding norms and values
2. Issues or problems regarding decisions over life and death
3. Issues or problems of order, safety and justice
4. Issues or problems connected to solidarity and humanity
5. Issues or problems connected to principles of law
6. Issues or problems connected to professionalism
7. Other problems or issues relating to organized society

3) *Issues and problems in market relations*

1. Issues or problems connected to reciprocal trust
2. Issues or problems of honest competition
3. Issues or problems connected to efficiency and business
4. Other problems or issues relating to market relations

4) *Issues and problems connected with freedom and individual expression*

1. Issues or problems connected with freedom and personal growth
2. Issues or problems connected with love and romance
3. Issues or problems connected with friendship
4. Issues or problems connected with pleasure, hedonism
5. Issues or problems with collective experience
6. Other problems and issues connected with freedom and individual expression

5) *Other (open category)*

INSTRUCTION: Types of Morality

Overview of different types of morality – styles of moral reasoning (cf. Tipton, 2002)

Authoritative morality

The authoritative morality is associated with tightly knit parental institutions, prototypically the family but also in loco parentis institutions such as the military and the church as well as the nation at large. Within this social order the community is central, not the individual.

Purpose: continuation of the primary group

Relationships: Relationships without consent/ born into/leaving this group is nearly impossible: family, strong group ties, affection as bond and fatherland, solidarity and vertical inequality in relationships.

Asks: Obedience to authority, duties, lack of ego and initiative unless benefitting the Group, conformity, rules an honor (for the group). Deals with ties of kinship and identity.

Requirements: Physical safety and basal trust

Regulative morality

The regulative morality, presupposes a set of social roles that are defined by obligatory roles of interaction and professional ideals of character, such as being a good doctor. “Duties and virtues derive from principles rather than commands, and they fuse role and personality in consciously learned practices rather than ascribed statuses. Affective ties are weaker in such communities of practice than in the family” (2002, p.24).

Purpose: serving the common good, general norms and values

Relationships: Equals, civilians, government and policy of equality, solidarity

Asks: Principal and formal equality, debate, pluriformity, values such as reason, truth, ratio and professionalism.

Requirements: justice and safety, protection in accordance with the law, professionalism, civic duty

Market morality

Market morality, is tied to the organizational structure that “links free, equal, and self-interested individuals through exchange and contract, whether as buyers and sellers or investors and entrepreneurs”.

Purpose: mutually beneficial advantage, profit, work for pay (meritocracy)

Relationships: instrumental producer-consumer: based on trust, competition and inequality.

Asks: give and take mentality, liberalism, initiative, purpose, investment, market mentality

Requirements: capitalism

Expressive morality

Expressive morality is rooted in the leisure institutions of private life (i.e. couples, friends), in which members are connected through shared tastes and experiences.

Purpose: expression of individuality, authenticity, freedom and personal feelings and emotions

Relationships: common interests, affective relationships, non-committal, kindred spirits, congeniality

Asks: sensitivity, empathy, romantic en friendly entanglements, aesthetics, game, non-conformism, intensity and enjoyment.

Requirements: light friendly commitments, trust, transience and change

9. Is the *authoritative morality* present in the storyline?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

10. Is the *regulative morality* present in the storyline?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

11. Is the *market morality* present in the storyline?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

12. Is the *expressive morality* present in the storyline?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

Moral complexity

Moral complexity appears if types of morality conflict with each other in a storyline. This might be the case when different types of morality clash in a conflict, or when different positions from within one type of moral reasoning conflict.

Code moral complexity if:

- a) Different positions within one type of morality clash with each other in the storyline (assumption is that you have coded at least one type of morality in items 9 though 12)
- b) If different types of morality (coded in items 9 through 12) are in conflict with each other.
- c) This conflict might eventually be resolved in a juxtaposition of the types of morality. That means that the conflict is eventually settled while giving equal importance to standpoints from both of the types of morality..

13. Does the storyline represent moral complexity?

1. No moral complexity
2. Yes, complexity within one type of morality
3. Yes, moral complexity resulting in juxtaposition
4. Yes, moral complexity due to conflict between differing types of morality

Recording unit II: Moral casting in fictional television programs**Main characters**

A main character is defined as a character who plays a leading role, is the carrier of a storyline and is thereby indispensable to the narrative (Egri, 1960; Weijers, 2014). In each program you can code up to eight main characters for the main storyline. For each main character you will code several variables relating to demographic and moral categories.

14. Number of main characters

Instruction: For 2010 this translates into the program number + number of the main character (1 through 8). For example program number 20189 + main character 1 = 201891; + main character 2 = 201892; etc.

15. Name all the main characters (up to 8, open answer)**16. Gender**

What is the gender of the main character?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Male animated/creature
4. Female animated/creature
9. Other

17. Age

What is the age of the main character?

Instruction: The coding categories for *age of the main character* reflect five life cycles, and you need to establish the age of the character by determining which age group or life stage (i.e. child: 0-12 years, teenager: 13-18 years, young adult: 19-29 years, adult: 30-64 years or elderly: 65 and older) the character is supposed to represent. If the main character is represented in various life stages, the life stage that is dominant (i.e. takes up most of the screen time) has to be coded. If it remains unclear use the unable to code option.

1. The main character is a child (0-12 years)
2. The main character is a teenager (13-18 years)
3. The main character is a young adult (19-35 years)
4. The main character is an adult (36-64 years)
5. The main character is a senior (65 years and older)
9. Unable to code

18. Transgression

Does the main character commit a transgression?

Transgression: Every act or behavior that is in violation of the law, customs, and norms, even when it is not out of malicious intent.

1. No (move on to item 23)
2. Yes (continue to item 19)

Instruction: If the main character commits more than one transgression within a specific type of transgression (i.e. murder and robbery – both transgression of law), code the transgression with the most moral weight and largest moral repercussions (i.e. murder trumps robbery). If the transgressions are of similar moral weight, choose the option other.

19. Transgression of the law

Does the main character commit a transgression of the law?

1. No, does not commit transgression of law
2. Yes:
 1. 'Commits a violent transgression'
 2. 'Commits a sexual offence'
 3. 'Commits a financial offence'
 4. 'Commits another type of transgression of law'

20. Professional transgression

Does the main character commit a professional transgression?

Instruction: You can only code a professional transgression if the story clearly shows or mentions that a professional rule has been violated – simply put: it would be impossible for you to know the professional codes of all professions.

1. No, does not commit a professional transgression
2. Yes:
 1. 'Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct'
 2. 'Behavior is characterized as incompetent'
 3. 'Commits insubordination'
 4. 'Commits another type professional transgression'

21. Social transgression

Does the main character commit a social transgression?

Instruction: You can only code a social transgression if the story clearly shows or mentions that a social "rule" has been violated – as one important indicator look at how people around the main character respond to the violation.

1. No, does not commit a social transgression
2. Yes:
 1. 'Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats'
 2. 'Breaks the bonds of the primary group'
 3. 'Displays indecent, inappropriate or vulgar behavior'
 4. 'Commits another type social transgression'

22. Consequences of transgression

What are the consequences of the transgression for the main character ?

Instruction: If the main character commits more than one type of transgression, then code the consequences of the transgression with the most moral weight (i.e. murder trumps lying). If the transgression are of similar moral weight, and both face different consequences, choose the option other.

1. No consequences
2. Transgression is punished
 - 2.1 Through a judicial process
 - 2.2 Punished socially (Rituals of Shaming, reprimand, dishonor, ending relationship/ friendship)
 - 2.3 Punished professionally (contract termination, reprimand)
 - 2.4 Punished in another way
3. Transgression is rewarded
4. Transgression produces mixed/ambivalent consequences (reprimand by one person and compliments by another)
5. Other

23. Moral nature of main character

What is the moral nature of the main character?

Instruction: Moral nature has to be determined by behavior of the character (i.e. transgressions committed) and the verbal judgment of characters of that behavior (by others).

1. Good (good characters are categorized as such if they are good in their goals, motivations, intentions and other observable behavior (i.e. committed no (severe) transgressions) and they received no criticism or other negative judgments about their behavior from others.)
2. Bad (bad characters are categorized as such if their observable behavior can be typed as evil or bad (in goals, motivations or intentions), if they commit severe transgressions and are judged for them by others)
3. Ambivalent (Ambivalent characters are categorized as such if their observable behavior is categorized by both good and bad with regard to goals, intentions and motivations (for example doing the wrong things for the right reasons), as exemplified by the verbal praise of judgment from others.)
4. Unable to code

APPENDIX III

Codebook Morality and Television

Codebook Morality and Television

version 15, date: 18-4-2013

Originally in Dutch, used in study 6 and 7 in this dissertation

© Serena Daalmans

General Instruction

Introduction

This is the codebook which will be used to analyze content broadcasted on Dutch prime time television, as a part of the larger ongoing PhD-project entitled *Television and Morality*. The codebook should be regarded as the instruction manual before coding as well as reference guide during the coding. The codebook consists of three parts: Recording Unit I deals with background characteristics of the program, Recording Unit II focuses on the aspects of morality represented in the content of the program, while Recording Unit III deals with aspects of the moral casting in the program.

The material

In this research project content analysis will be used to analyze the content of television programs broadcast on Dutch prime time television in 2012. The clustered sample consists of 485 programs, from ten channels (Public: NL 1, 2, and 3; Commercial: RTL 4, 5, 7 and 8, Net5, Veronica and SBS6) aired on seventy consecutive evenings broadcasted in the period between March (19/3) and May (27/5) of 2012.

Before coding

You have been given a specific amount of material, including the material that is used for reliability analyses. Of all the material around 20 percent will be coded by two coders, in order to calculate reliabilities. If you are the primary coder of certain material, you are supposed to make a list of the names of the persons (*in news and entertainment programs*) and characters (*in fictional programs*) in the order you coded them. The secondary coder will then use this list to maintain the same order in coding the persons and characters, solely for the material that is double-coded. If you are the secondary coder ask the primary coder for this list, before you start coding the material that is marked as double-coding material.

When coding, you will need the following

- The codebook
- The coding sheet
- A computer which can play video files
- The assigned coding materials (i.e. the television programs)
- Form to note the order of appearance of coded persons and characters

Instruction before coding

1. Read the entire codebook before watching the program
2. Start the program and carefully watch the program from start to finish. Have pen and paper at hand to make notes about the items, storylines, persons and characters. Since the context-unit is one episode, you are only allowed to use the information that is presented in that episode. Background information which you have from watching previous or future episodes of the program cannot be used here! Information should be based on visuals and spoken dialogue in the program. Be sure to listen for the names

of persons and characters, often they are not included in the subtitles, but you do need them in identifying and coding the persons and characters.

3. Start your coding by filling out Recording Unit I focused background characteristics of the program. Then move on to Recording Unit II which deals with aspects of the moral content of television fiction. Afterwards you will start coding the items in Recording Unit III, where you will code persons and characters and their characteristics. A reminder here, is that you need to note the order in which you code the persons and characters on the crib sheet for the second coder, with name and if a name is missing a description. This is to ensure that the secondary coder will keep the same order of characters.

Recording Unit I: Background characteristics of the program

1. Coder number

Fill in your personal coder number.

2. Program number

Record the predefined program number for this program

3. Broadcaster

1. Public (Nederland 1, 2 and 3)
2. Commercial (RTL 4, 5, 7 and 8, Net5, Veronica and SBS6)
3. Other

4. Title of the program

5. Origin of the program

Here you code where the program was created. You can discern this by looking at the end credits or based on the spoken language in the program. If the spoken language is respectively Dutch, American-English, British-English, German, French, and there are no other clues that the program might have been produced elsewhere, then code respectively: 'The Netherlands', 'The United States', 'Great-Britain', 'Germany', or 'France'.

If the program appears to be a co-production (e.g. Germany-France) or if another country produced the program (e.g. Australia, Canada etc.) then you code 'Other'. If the origin of the program is unknown or difficult to define, you will code 'Unable to code'.

1. The Netherlands
2. U.S.
3. Germany
4. Great-Britain
5. France
6. Other
9. Unable to code

6. Content of the program

Here you code a (genre)typing of the content of the program.

1. News and information

- 1.1 News (NOS Journaal, RTL Nieuws, Hart van NL)
- 1.2 Current affairs program (NOVA, Netwerk, EenVandaag etc.)
- 1.3 Current affairs talkshow (Pauw en Witteman, De Wereld Draait door, Knevel en van de Brink etc.)
- 1.4 Consumer program (Radar, Kassa, RamBam)
- 1.5 Documentary / Portret (Man bijt Hond)
- 1.6 Other (bijvoorbeeld het weer als losse uitzending)

2. Entertainment

- 2.1 Entertainment-talkshow (Jensen, Jerry Springer, RTL Boulevard etc.)
- 2.2 Reality program (Boer zoekt Vrouw, Oh Oh Cherso, Try before you die, Spoorloos, datingprogramma's)
- 2.3 Lifestyle program (Eigen huis en Tuin; Life and Cooking; Extreme Home Make-over)
- 2.4 Quiz or gameshow (Twee voor Twaalf, Weten zij veel, Per seconde wijzer, Lingo)
- 2.5 Crimeprogram (Opsporing verzocht, Peter R de Vries, Politie op je hielen)
- 2.6 Reality competition (The Voice of Holland, X-Factor, Het beste idee van Nederland, Expeditie Robinson, So you think you can Dance etc.)
- 2.7 Other

3. Fiction

- 3.1 Comedy
- 3.3 Drama
 - 3.3.1 Soap
 - 3.3.2 Psychological drama
 - 3.3.3 Detective, thriller
 - 3.3.4 Judicial drama
 - 3.3.5 Medical drama
 - 3.3.6 Action
 - 3.3.7 Other (e.g. historical drama or science fiction)

Recording Unit II: Moral content in television programs

General instruction: For news and entertainment programs you will code up to a maximum of 10 items per program. An item is a specific part of the program (with a clear beginning and end) that is devoted to a specified topic. For each item you will code Recording Unit II and III. A news broadcast usually consists of around 10 items, while a current affairs program usually consists of four or five items which are discussed more extensively. Also, a program in the news genre might be just one item sometimes – for example a documentary about climate change or a consumer program devoted to faulty equipment or a sports program focused on a single soccer match.

We code a **maximum of 10 items**, if the program consists of more items: code the first 10.
For fictional programs, we code only the main storyline. The main storyline is defined as the storyline that takes up most of the screen time, and/or has the most characters involved in the progression of the narrative arc, and/or shows the most complexity in the problem-resolutions (Weijers, 2014; Wester & Weijers, 2006).

Each story line can be defined in terms of narrative cycles:

A: problem > B: choice > C: decision > A1: (new or change of) problem, etc. (for example: A: there is not enough proof to arrest the prime suspect of a murder > B: should I go by the book or force a confession > C: I force a confession > A1: the evidence is illegally obtained and cannot be used in a court of law, etc.).

7. What is the main topic of the item (in news and entertainment programs) or the main storyline (fictional programs) (shortly describe)

8. Moral community

The moral community is defined here as a group of individuals with its own set of (behavioral) rules, obligations and commitments that individuals are held accountable to. This community is able and allowed to judge the behavior of the main character in the storyline.

From the vantage point of which moral community are the persons and characters judged for their behavior

- 1) *The traditional or parental communities*: These are communities based on blood and identity - ranging from the family unit, and other parental institutions such as the army, towards the more abstract (national) community.
 - 1.1 Family and important others
 - 1.2 Clan / religious community / ideological groups (i.e. mafia, or religious sects)
 - 1.3 The national community (large and small – village, city, The Netherlands, Europe or World)
 - 1.4 Other
- 2) *Institutional communities*: groups within the (democratic) organization of society in institutions
 - 2.1 Justice
 - 2.2 Medicine
 - 2.3 Education
 - 2.4 Media
 - 2.5 Politics and government
 - 2.6 Other
- 3) *Market related communities*: communities based on reciprocated (self)interests with a focus on success and capitalist thrift and trust.
 - 3.1 Shop/ store / commercial enterprise
 - 3.2 Consumer organization
 - 3.3 Professionals, experts (non-governmental)
 - 3.4 Other

- 4) *'Chosen, light communities'*: communities based on individual choice of participation based on tastes and (romantic /friendly) relations .
 - 4.1 Romantic relationship
 - 4.2 Friends and peers
 - 4.3 Recreational organizations
 - 4.4 Other
- 5) *Other*

9. What is the domain that is central in the topic or storyline

In which area of everyday life does the item or storyline unfold?

1. Family (including couples living together with or without children)
2. Law, order and justice
3. Politics
4. Health(care)
5. Education and science
6. Culture, Art, and Media
7. Economy, finance and business
8. Leisure (romantic/friendship)
9. Sports
10. Other

10. Moral theme

The moral theme of an item or storyline is the topic or thematic focus characterized at a more abstract level. A theme can be shown, it can be talked about or it can be inferred. The main moral theme is often related to the central problems that are discussed or represented. What is the moral theme of the item or storyline?

Instruction: code a specific moral theme if it is very clear, otherwise code it as a general problem in a specific thematic category.

1) *Issues and problems surrounding kinship & identity*

1. The battle between Good and Evil
2. Issues or problems with Marriage and (extended) family
3. Issues or problems with authority
4. Problems or issues connected to honor and shame
5. Other problems or issues relating to kinship & identity

2) *Issues and problems in organized society*

1. Issues or problems regarding norms and values
2. Issues or problems regarding decisions over life and death
3. Issues or problems of order, safety and justice
4. Issues or problems connected to solidarity and humanity
5. Issues or problems connected to principles of law
6. Issues or problems connected to professionalism
7. Other problems or issues relating to organized society

- 3) *Issues and problems in market relations*
- 1. Issues or problems connected to reciprocal trust
 - 2. Issues or problems of honest competition
 - 3. Issues or problems connected to efficiency and business
 - 4. Issues or problems connected to promotion
 - 5. Other problems or issues relating to market relations
- 4) *Issues and problems connected with freedom and individual expression*
- 1. Issues or problems connected with freedom and personal growth
 - 2. Issues or problems connected with love and romance
 - 3. Issues or problems connected with friendship
 - 4. Issues or problems connected with pleasure, hedonism
 - 5. Issues or problems with collective experience
- 5) *Other (open category)*

Instruction for types of morality

Overview of different types of morality – styles of moral reasoning (cf. Tipton, 2002)

Authoritative morality

The authoritative morality is associated with tightly knit parental institutions, prototypically the family but also in loco parentis institutions such as the military and the church as well as the nation at large. Within this social order the community is central, not the individual.

Purpose: continuation of the primary group

Relationships: Relationships without consent/ born into/leaving this group is nearly impossible: family, strong group ties, affection as bond and fatherland, solidarity and vertical inequality in relationships.

Asks: Obedience to authority, duties, lack of ego and initiative unless benefitting the Group, conformity, rules an honor (for the group). Deals with ties of kinship and identity.

Requirements: Physical safety and basal trust

Regulative morality

The regulative morality, presupposes a set of social roles that are defined by obligatory roles of interaction and professional ideals of character, such as being a good doctor. “Duties and virtues derive from principles rather than commands, and they fuse role and personality in consciously learned practices rather than ascribed statuses. Affective ties are weaker in such communities of practice than in the family” (2002, p.24).

Purpose: serving the common good, general norms and values

Relationships: Equals, civilians, government and policy of equality, solidarity

Asks: Principal and formal equality, debate, pluriformity, values such as reason, truth, ratio and professionalism.

Requirements: justice and safety, protection in accordance with the law, professionalism, civic duty

Market morality

Market morality, is tied to the organizational structure that “links free, equal, and self-interested individuals through exchange and contract, whether as buyers and sellers or investors and entrepreneurs”.

Purpose: mutually beneficial advantage, profit, work for pay (meritocracy)

Relationships: instrumental producer-consumer: based on trust, competition and inequality.

Asks: give and take mentality, liberalism, initiative, purpose, investment, market mentality

Requirements: capitalism

Expressive morality

Expressive morality is rooted in the leisure institutions of private life (i.e. couples, friends), in which members are connected through shared tastes and experiences.

Purpose: expression of individuality, authenticity, freedom and personal feelings and emotions

Relationships: common interests, affective relationships, non-committal, kindred spirits, congeniality

Asks: sensitivity, empathy, romantic en friendly entanglements, aesthetics, game, non-conformism, intensity and enjoyment.

Requirements: light friendly commitments, trust, transience and change

Instruction: morality is generally present in all items/stories, unless the item only focuses on information without attention for judgments or problems (for example, the factual overview of the stock market or the weather forecast for the next day).

11. Presence morality

Does the item/story contain a type of morality?

- 1. Yes, the item/story contains one or more types of morality
- 2. No, this item/story contains no morality (move on to Recoding Unit III)

12. Is the *authoritive morality* present in the storyline?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

13. Is the *regulative morality* present in the storyline?

1. No
2. Yes

14. Is the *market morality* present in the storyline?

1. No
2. Yes

15. Is the *expressive morality* present in the storyline?

1. No
2. Yes

16. Moral complexity

Moral complexity appears if types of morality conflict with each other in an item or storyline. This might be the case when different types of morality clash in a conflict, or when different positions from within one type of moral reasoning conflict.

Code moral complexity if:

- a) Different positions within one type of morality clash with each other in the item or storyline (assumption is that you have coded at least one type of morality in items 12 through 15)
- b) If different types of morality (coded in items 12 through 15) are in conflict with each other.
- c) This conflict might eventually be resolved in a juxtaposition of the types of morality. That means that the conflict is eventually settled while giving equal importance to standpoints from both of the types of morality.

1. No moral complexity
2. Yes, complexity within one type of morality
3. Yes, moral complexity resulting in juxtaposition
4. Yes, moral complexity due to conflict between differing types

Recording unit III: Moral casting in television programs**17. Number of person or character**

Instruction: Combine the program number + number of the person or character (1 through 8).

For example 201212 + main character 1 = 2012121; + main character 2 = 2012122; etc.

18. Name all the persons or main characters (up to 8, open answer)**19. Gender**

What is the gender of the person / character?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Male animated/creature
4. Female animated/creature
9. Other

20. Age

What is the age of the person/ character?

Instruction: The coding categories for *age* reflect five life cycles, and you need to establish the age of the person/character by determining which age group or life stage (i.e. child: 0-12 years, teenager: 13-18 years, young adult: 19-29 years, adult: 30-64 years or elderly: 65 and older) the person or character is supposed to represent. If the person or character is represented in various life stages, the life stage that is dominant (i.e. takes up most of the screen time) has to be coded. If it remains unclear use the unable to code option.

1. Child (0-12 years)
2. Teenager (13-18 years)
3. Young adult (19-35 years)
4. Adult (36-64 years)
5. Senior (65 years and older)
9. Unable to code

21. Transgression

Does the person or character commit a transgression?

Transgression: Every act or behavior that is in violation of the law, customs, and norms, even when it is not out of malicious intent.

1. No (move on to item 26)
2. Yes (continue to item 22)

Instruction: If the person or character commits more than one transgression within a specific type of transgression (i.e. murder and robbery – both transgression of law), code the transgression with the most moral weight and largest moral repercussions (i.e. murder trumps robbery). If the transgressions are of similar moral weight, choose the option other.

22. Transgression of the law

Does the person or character commit a transgression of the law?

1. No, does not commit transgression of law
2. Yes:

1. 'Commits a violent transgression'
2. 'Commits a sexual offence'
3. 'Commits a financial offence'
4. 'Commits another type of transgression of law'

23. Professional transgression

Does the person or character commit a professional transgression?

Instruction: You can only code a professional transgression if the story clearly shows or mentions that a professional rule has been violated – simply put: it would be impossible for you to know the professional codes of all professions.

1. No, does not commit a professional transgression
2. Yes:
 1. 'Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct'
 2. 'Behavior is characterized as incompetent'
 3. 'Commits insubordination'
 4. 'Commits another type professional transgression'

24. Social transgression

Does the person or character commit a social transgression?

Instruction: You can only code a social transgression if the story clearly shows or mentions that a social "rule" has been violated – as one important indicator look at how people around the main character respond to the violation.

1. No, does not commit a social transgression
2. Yes:
 1. 'Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats'
 2. 'Displays relational infidelity'
 3. 'Breaks the bonds of parental trust'
 4. 'Displays indecent, inappropriate or vulgar behavior'
 5. 'Commits another type social transgression'

25. Consequences of transgression

What are the consequences of the transgression for the person or character ?

Instruction: If the person or character commits more than one type of transgression, then code the consequences of the transgression with the most moral weight (i.e. murder trumps lying). If the transgression are of similar moral weight, and both face different consequences, choose the option other.

1. No consequences
2. Transgression is punished
 - 2.1 Through a judicial process
 - 2.2 Punished socially (Rituals of Shaming, reprimand, dishonor, ending relationship/ friendship)
 - 2.3 Punished professionally (contract termination, reprimand)
 - 2.4 Punished in another way
3. Transgression is rewarded
4. Transgression produces mixed/ambivalent consequences (reprimand by one person and compliments by another)
5. Other

26. Moral nature of the person or character

What is the moral nature of the person or character?

Instruction: Moral nature has to be determined by behavior of the person or character (i.e. transgressions committed) and the verbal judgment of persons and characters of that behavior (by others).

1. Neutral (Neutral persons/characters have no goals, commit no transgressions and function purely as a source of (professional) information in an item (the reporter in the news broadcast, the weatherman in the news, the person informing viewers about the statistics of the stock market of the day).
2. Good (good persons and characters are categorized as such if they are good in their goals, motivations, intentions and other observable behavior (i.e. committed no (severe) transgressions) and they received no criticism or other negative judgments about their behavior from others.)
3. Bad (bad persons and characters are categorized as such if their observable behavior can be typed as evil or bad (in goals, motivations or intentions), if they commit severe transgressions and are judged for them by others)
4. Ambivalent (Ambivalent persons and characters are categorized as such if their observable behavior is categorized by both good and bad with regard to goals, intentions and motivations (for example doing the wrong things for the right reasons), as exemplified by the verbal praise of judgment from others.)
5. Unable to code

APPENDIX IV

Additional tables for Chapter 4 and 5

This appendix provides additional tables to chapters 4 and 5, adding in-depth insight to the results reported in the chapters.

Table 1 Type of fiction per year

	1985	1995	2005	2010	Total
Comedy	33.8	27.6	40.2	32.0	33.5
Soap	10.8	17.2	14.4	13.6	14.2
Psychological drama	12.3	9.2	10.3	1.0	7.7
Historical drama	0.0	2.3	1.0	4.9	2.3
Detective	20.0	17.2	14.4	26.2	19.6
Judicial drama	0.0	3.4	0.0	1.0	1.1
Medical drama	0.0	3.4	0.0	6.8	2.8
Horror	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.3
Science-fiction	0.0	3.4	3.1	1.0	2.0
Fantasy	0.0	0.0	6.2	5.8	3.4
Action	1.5	6.9	1.0	3.9	3.4
Western	4.6	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.1
Other	16.9	8.0	8.2	3.9	8.5
<i>n</i>	65	87	97	103	352

Note: χ^2 (36, N = 352) = 75.562, Cramer's V = .267, p < 0.001

Table 2 Subtypes of moral community per year

	1985	1995	2005	2010	Total
The traditional or parental communities					
<i>Family and important others</i>	36.9	25.3	27.8	27.2	28.7
<i>Clan / religious community/ ideological groups</i>	6.2	2.3	6.2	3.9	4.5
<i>The national community</i>	15.4	23.0	35.1	34.0	28.1
<i>Other</i>	0.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9
Institutional communities					
<i>Justice</i>	7.7	1.1	1.0	1.0	2.3
<i>Medicine</i>	1.5	4.6	4.1	5.8	4.3
<i>Education</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Media</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Politics and government</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Other</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Market related communities					
<i>Shop/store/commercial enterprise</i>	1.5	9.2	2.1	1.9	3.7
<i>Consumer organization</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Professionals, experts</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Other</i>	1.5	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.6
Chosen, light communities					
<i>Romantic relationship</i>	1.5	8.0	6.2	5.8	5.7
<i>Friends and peers</i>	24.6	16.1	15.5	17.5	17.9
<i>Recreational organizations</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Other</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	1.5	2.3	0.0	1.9	1.4
<i>n</i>	65	87	97	103	352

Note: χ^2 (36, N = 1278) = 53.703, Cramer's V = .226, p = 0.029

Table 3 Subtypes of moral theme per year

	1985	1995	2005	2010	Total
Issues and problems surrounding kinship & identity					
<i>The battle between Good and Evil</i>	4.6	3.4	10.3	3.9	5.7
<i>Issues or problems with Marriage and (extended) family</i>	35.4	20.7	24.7	20.4	24.4
<i>Issues or problems with authority</i>	1.5	0.0	3.1	1.0	1.4
<i>Problems or issues connected to honor and shame</i>	1.5	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.6
<i>Other problems or issues relating to kinship & identity</i>	0.0	2.3	3.1	2.9	2.3
Issues and problems in organized society					
<i>Issues or problems regarding norms and values</i>	0.0	1.1	3.1	1.0	1.4
<i>Issues or problems regarding decisions over life and death</i>	0.0	1.1	1.0	3.9	1.7
<i>Issues or problems of order, safety and justice</i>	35.4	20.7	16.5	34.0	26.1
<i>Issues or problems connected to solidarity and humanity</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Issues or problems connected to principles of law</i>	1.5	3.4	3.1	1.9	2.6
<i>Issues or problems connected to professionalism</i>	3.1	5.7	0.0	1.0	2.3
<i>Other problems or issues relating to organized society</i>	1.5	5.7	1.0	1.0	2.3
Issues and problems in market relations					
<i>Issues or problems connected to reciprocal trust</i>	0.0	3.4	0.0	1.0	1.1
<i>Issues or problems of honest competition</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Issues or problems connected to efficiency and business</i>	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.6
<i>Issues or problems connected to promotion</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Other problems or issues relating to market relations</i>	4.6	6.9	2.1	2.9	4.0
Issues and problems connected with freedom and individual expression					
<i>Issues or problems connected with freedom and personal growth</i>	3.1	3.4	1.0	3.9	2.8
<i>Issues or problems connected with love and romance</i>	3.1	11.5	16.5	13.6	11.9
<i>Issues or problems connected with friendship</i>	1.5	2.3	4.1	3.9	3.1
<i>Issues or problems connected with pleasure, hedonism</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.3
<i>Issues or problems with collective experience</i>	0.0	3.4	1.0	1.0	1.4
<i>Other problems and issues connected with freedom and individual expression</i>	3.1	4.6	6.2	1.9	4.0
n	65	87	97	103	352

Note: χ^2 (60, N = 352) = 84.196, Cramer's V = .282, p = 0.021

Table 4 Consequences of transgressions over time

	1985	1995	2005	2010	Total
Transgression of law					
Punished	65.1	71.0	73.3	69.7	70.3
Other consequences	34.9	29.0	26.7	30.3	29.7
n	43	93	75	109	320
Professional transgression					
Punished	85.7	83.1	75.0	70.8	76.6
Other consequences	14.3	16.9	25.0	29.2	23.4
n	14	59	64	72	209
Social transgression					
Punished	81.4	72.9	72.6	74.6	74.4
Other consequences	18.6	27.1	27.4	25.4	25.6
n	113	203	299	299	914

Table 5 Subtype of transgression of the law per year

	1985	1995	2005	2010	Total
Does not commit any transgression of the law	70.3	64.2	76.7	70.2	70.7
Commits a violent transgression	19.3	23.5	13.0	14.8	16.9
Commits a sexual offence	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.3	0.4
Commits a financial offence	2.1	0.8	0.6	1.9	1.3
Commits another type of transgression of the law	8.3	11.5	8.7	12.8	10.7
n	145	260	322	366	1093

Note: χ^2 (12, N = 1093) = 25.729, Cramer's V = .089, p = 0.012

Table 6 Subtypes of transgressions of the law committed by characters of different moral natures

	Good	Bad	Ambivalent	Total
Does not commit any transgression of the law	100.0	3.9	75.6	70.7
Commits a violent transgression	0.0	67.1	13.2	16.9
Commits a sexual offence	0.0	3.9	0.1	0.4
Commits a financial offence	0.0	3.9	1.1	1.3
Commits another type of transgression of the law	0.0	21.1	10.0	10.7
<i>n</i>	4	76	1013	1093

Note: $\chi^2 (8, N = 1093) = 215.494$, *Cramer's V* = .314, $p < 0.001$

Table 7 Subtype of professional transgression per year

	1985	1995	2005	2010	Total
Does not commit any professional transgression	90.3	77.3	80.1	80.3	80.9
Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct	6.9	13.8	3.7	8.5	8.1
Behavior is characterized as incompetent	2.1	7.7	8.1	6.8	6.8
Commits insubordination	0.0	0.8	6.8	2.2	2.9
Commits another type professional transgression	0.7	0.4	1.2	2.2	1.3
<i>n</i>	145	260	322	366	1093

Note: $\chi^2 (12, N = 1093) = 56.555$, *Cramer's V* = .131, $p < 0.001$

Table 8 Subtypes of professional transgressions committed by characters of different moral natures

	Good	Bad	Ambivalent	Total
Does not commit any professional transgression	75.0	88.2	80.4	80.9
Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct	0.0	7.9	8.2	8.1
Behavior is characterized as incompetent	25.0	2.6	7.0	6.8
Commits insubordination	0.0	0.0	3.2	2.9
Commits another type professional transgression	0.0	1.3	1.3	1.3
<i>n</i>	4	76	1013	1093

Note: $\chi^2 (8, N = 1093) = 7.434$, *Cramer's V* = .058, $p > 0.05$

Table 9 Subtype of social transgression per year

	1985	1995	2005	2010	Total
Does not commit any social transgression	22.1	21.9	7.1	18.3	16.4
Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats	15.9	30.8	28.6	27.3	27.0
Breaks the bonds of the primary group	4.1	6.5	6.2	7.1	6.3
Displays indecent, inappropriate of vulgar behavior	55.9	40.4	57.8	47.0	49.8
Commits another type social transgression	2.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5
<i>n</i>	145	260	322	366	1093

Note: $\chi^2 (12, N = 1093) = 52.621$, *Cramer's V* = .127, $p < 0.001$

Table 10 Subtypes of social transgressions committed by characters of different moral natures

	Good	Bad	Ambivalent	Total
Does not commit any social transgression	25.0	46.1	14.1	16.4
Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats	25.0	39.5	26.1	27.0
Breaks the bonds of the primary group	0.0	3.9	6.5	49.8
Displays indecent, inappropriate or vulgar behavior	50.0	10.5	52.7	6.3
Commits another type social transgression	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.5
<i>n</i>	4	76	1013	1093

Note: $\chi^2 (8, N = 1093) = 75.675$, *Cramer's V* = .186, $p < 0.001$

APPENDIX V

Additional tables for Chapter 6 and 7

This appendix provides additional tables to Chapters 6 and 7, adding in-depth insight to the results reported in the chapters.

Table 1 Build-up of sample

	Items	Frequencies
News and information		
News broadcast	359	28.1
Current affairs programs	106	8.3
Current affairs talk show	52	4.1
Consumer program	11	0.9
Documentary	59	4.6
Other	97	7.6
Entertainment		
Entertainment talk show	84	6.6
Reality program	147	11.5
Lifestyle program	37	2.9
Quiz or game show	19	1.5
Reality crime show	82	6.4
Competitive reality program	12	0.9
Other	101	7.9
Fiction		
Comedy	50	3.9
Soap	9	0.7
Psychological drama	3	0.2
Detective, thriller	29	2.3
Judicial drama	1	0.1
Medical drama	3	0.2
Action	4	0.3
Other	13	1.0
Total	1278	100%

Table 2 Subtypes of moral community per genre

	News and information	Entertainment	Fiction	Total
The traditional or parental communities				
<i>Family and important others</i>	0.4	6.8	35.7	5.9
<i>Clan / religious community / ideological groups</i>	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.1
<i>The national community</i>	91.5	69.1	32.1	77.9
<i>Other</i>	0.3	1.5	0.9	0.8
Institutional communities				
<i>Justice</i>	0.9	4.6	13.4	3.4
<i>Medicine</i>	0.3	2.7	0.0	1.2
<i>Education</i>	0.6	0.0	0.9	0.4
<i>Media</i>	0.9	1.2	0.0	0.9
<i>Politics and government</i>	3.2	0.0	0.0	1.7
<i>Other</i>	0.1	0.0	0.9	0.2
Market related communities				
<i>Shop/ store / commercial enterprise</i>	0.0	3.1	1.8	1.3
<i>Consumer organization</i>	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.2
<i>Professionals, experts</i>	1.5	7.3	0.9	3.6
<i>Other</i>	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.2
Chosen, light communities				
<i>Romantic relationship</i>	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.7
<i>Friends and peers</i>	0.0	0.4	11.6	1.2
<i>Recreational organizations</i>	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>Other</i>	0.0	0.6	0.9	0.3
n	684	482	112	1278

Note: $\chi^2(34, N = 1278) = 550.738$, Cramer's $V = .464$, $p < 0.001$

Table 3 Subtypes of moral theme per genre

	News and information	Entertainment	Fiction	Total
There is no moral theme	11.3	10.6	0.0	10.0
Issues and problems surrounding kinship & identity				
<i>The battle between Good and Evil</i>	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.1
<i>Issues or problems with Marriage and (extended) family</i>	3.4	7.1	27.7	6.9
<i>Issues or problems with authority</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Problems or issues connected to honor and shame</i>	2.8	0.8	0.9	1.9
<i>Other problems or issues relating to kinship & identity</i>	0.7	1.2	0.9	0.9
Issues and problems in organized society				
<i>Issues or problems regarding politics</i>	17.0	0.8	0.0	9.4
<i>Issues or problems regarding economy</i>	7.9	0.2	0.0	4.3
<i>Issues or problems regarding decisions over life and death</i>	2.5	5.4	3.6	3.7
<i>Issues or problems of order, safety and justice</i>	14.8	23.4	30.4	19.4
<i>Issues or problems connected to solidarity and humanity</i>	1.8	0.4	0.0	1.1
<i>Issues or problems connected to principles of law</i>	2.0	0.6	0.0	1.3
<i>Issues or problems connected to professionalism</i>	2.6	2.7	0.9	2.5
<i>Other problems or issues relating to organized society</i>	5.6	1.2	0.9	3.5

Table 3 Continued

	News and information	Entertainment	Fiction	Total
Issues and problems in market relations				
<i>Issues or problems connected to reciprocal trust</i>	0.1	0.2	0.9	0.2
<i>Issues or problems of honest competition</i>	8.0	7.5	3.6	7.4
<i>Issues or problems connected to efficiency and business</i>	0.3	3.1	0.0	1.3
<i>Issues or problems connected to promotion</i>	3.5	8.1	0.0	4.9
<i>Other problems or issues relating to market relations</i>	2.2	4.4	0.9	2.9
Issues and problems connected with freedom and individual expression				
<i>Issues or problems connected with freedom and personal growth</i>	2.5	3.7	4.5	3.1
<i>Issues or problems connected with love and romance</i>	0.6	4.8	11.6	3.1
<i>Issues or problems connected with friendship</i>	0.6	0.6	4.5	0.9
<i>Issues or problems connected with pleasure, hedonism</i>	3.8	7.3	4.5	5.2
<i>Issues or problems with collective experience</i>	4.7	1.9	0.0	3.2
<i>Other problems and issues connected with freedom and individual expression</i>	1.5	3.9	3.6	2.6
n	684	482	112	1278

Note: χ^2 (46, N = 1278) = 437.182, Cramer's V = .414, $p < 0.001$

Table 4 Consequences of transgressions per genre

	News and information	Entertainment	Fiction	Total
Transgression of law				
Punished	50.0	79.3	60.6	64.0
Other consequences	50.0	20.7	39.4	36.0
<i>n</i>	8	29	99	136
Professional transgression				
Punished	78.6	72.0	52.6	66.3
Other consequences	21.4	28.0	47.4	33.8
<i>n</i>	28	75	57	160
Social transgression				
Punished	66.7	55.4	69.6	64.9
Other consequences	33.3	44.6	30.4	35.1
<i>n</i>	27	112	217	356

Table 5 Subtype of transgression of the law per genre

	News and information	Entertainment	Fiction	Total
Does not commit any transgression of the law	88.7	88.6	71.6	79.8
Commits a violent transgression	9.9	3.1	25.6	15.5
Commits a sexual offence	1.4	1.6	0.3	0.9
Commits a financial offence	0.0	6.7	2.6	3.9
<i>n</i>	71	254	348	673

Note: $\chi^2 (6, N = 673) = 67.966$, *Cramer's V* = .225, $p < 0.001$

Table 6 Subtypes of transgressions of the law committed by characters of different moral natures

	Good	Bad	Ambivalent	Total
Does not commit any transgression of the law	100	16.2	87.6	79.8
Commits a violent transgression	0	68.9	8.9	15.5
Commits a sexual offence	0	0.0	1.0	0.9
Commits a financial offence	0	14.9	2.5	3.9
<i>N</i>	4	74	595	673

Note: $\chi^2 (6, N = 673) = 223.095$, *Cramer's V* = .314, $p < 0.001$

Table 7 Subtype of professional transgression per genre

	News and information	Entertainment	Fiction	Total
Does not commit any professional transgression	65.0	73.5	84.7	78.3
Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct	7.5	2.5	10.2	6.9
Behavior is characterized as incompetent	26.3	23.3	2.7	13.2
Commits insubordination	1.3	0.7	2.4	1.6
<i>n</i>	80	283	373	736

Note: $\chi^2 (6, N = 736) = 85.071$, *Cramer's V* = .240, $p < 0.001$

Table 8 Subtypes of professional transgressions committed by characters of different moral natures

	Good	Bad	Ambivalent	Total
Does not commit any professional transgression	60.0	95.5	76.0	78.3
Behaves unethically/ violates professional code of conduct	0.0	4.5	7.3	6.9
Behavior is characterized as incompetent	20.0	0.0	15.0	13.2
Commits insubordination	20.0	0.0	1.7	1.6
<i>n</i>	5	89	642	736

Note: $\chi^2 (6, N = 736) = 30.525$, *Cramer's V* = .144, $p < 0.001$

Table 9 Subtype of social transgression per year

	News and information	Entertainment	Fiction	Total
Does not commit any social transgression	59.7	51.5	39.0	45.6
Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats	10.4	4.3	25.6	16.5
Displays relational infidelity	0.0	0.4	4.8	2.8
Breaks the bonds of parental trust	7.5	3.9	2.2	3.4
Displays indecent, inappropriate of vulgar behavior	22.4	39.8	28.4	31.8
<i>n</i>	67	231	356	654

Note: $\chi^2 (8, N = 654) = 72.340$, *Cramer's V* = .235, $p < 0.001$

Table 10 Subtypes of social transgressions committed by characters of different moral natures

	Good	Bad	Ambivalent	Total
Does not commit any social transgression	60.0	64.4	42.5	45.6
Commits fraud, lies, and or cheats	40.0	20.7	15.7	16.5
Displays relational infidelity	0.0	0.0	3.2	2.8
Breaks the bonds of parental trust	0.0	1.1	3.7	3.4
Displays indecent, inappropriate of vulgar behavior	0.0	13.8	34.9	31.8
<i>n</i>	5	87	562	654

Note: $\chi^2 (8, N = 654) = 27.702$, *Cramer's V* = .146, $p < 0.05$

Nederlandse samenvatting

Dankwoord

Curriculum Vitae

Nederlandse samenvatting

Het onderwerp van deze studie dient gezien te worden tegen de achtergrond van maatschappelijke en wetenschappelijke discussies over de relatie tussen televisie en moraal. In deze discussies wordt de rol die televisie zou spelen in het algehele morele verval van de samenleving centraal gesteld (Biltereyst, 2004; Eden, Grizzard, & Lewis, 2013). Wat deze discussies gemeen hebben is dat ervan wordt uitgegaan dat televisie nog steeds als één van de belangrijkste verhalenvertellers van onze tijd functioneert, en dat televisie naast het onderwijs gezien wordt als een prominente socialisatiebron voor de samenleving als geheel. In onze optiek gaan deze discussies aan een fundamenteel punt voorbij, namelijk een feitelijke beschrijving en inventarisatie van wat het is dat televisie haar kijkers daadwerkelijk te bieden heeft aan morele inhoud.

In de communicatiewetenschappelijke theorie behoort de connectie van media en moraal tot de kern van het cohesieperspectief, waarin de media (waaronder televisie) worden opgevat als klankbodems die door voortdurende herhaling van (morele) boodschappen kunnen bijdragen aan de instandhouding van de cultuur van een samenleving. Die bijdrage kan bijvoorbeeld tot uitdrukking komen in de 'moraal van het verhaal' zoals beschreven door Gerbner (1969), maar ook in de spiegeling en thematisering van wat er speelt aan belangrijke problemen in de samenleving. In deze opvatting functioneert televisie in overdrachtelijke zin als een in essentie ideologisch conservatief instituut, dat de samenleving behoedt voor ideologische onzekerheid bij plotselinge maatschappelijke problemen of bedreiging van de orde.

Voor ons onderzoek naar de relatie tussen moraliteit en televisie, wordt televisie opgevat als een boodschapsysteem dat de gemeenschap op de hoogte houdt van hoe de wereld er tegenwoordig uitziet, wat er allemaal is, wat belangrijk is, goed en slecht en hoe dat allemaal tot stand komt (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Behalve deze visie op televisie als conservatief instituut, achten wij ook het perspectief van Newcomb en Hirsch (1984) op televisie als cultureel forum van belang. Zij veronderstellen dat televisie een expressief medium is met een boodschap net zo tegenstrijdig en pluriform is als de cultuur waar het een weerspiegeling van is. Deze auteurs spreken daarom ook van een cultureel forum, waar diverse opvattingen van de maatschappelijke en morele orde worden uitgetoetst en uitgedragen. Dat maakt het boodschapsysteem van televisie in principe tot een heterogene ruimte waarin vele visies naast elkaar voorkomen en soms ook tegenover elkaar kunnen staan. Daarmee draagt televisie niet alleen bij aan het behoud, maar ook aan de verandering van de samenleving.

Wanneer we meer specifiek kijken naar empirisch onderzoek dat al gedaan is naar de morele inhoud van televisie, wordt snel duidelijk dat het gaat om een grote diversiteit aan onderzoeksthema's. Zo is moraal op televisie bestudeerd vanuit de invalshoek van onder andere normen, waarden, gedragsregels en (morele) emoties. Daarnaast is dat onderzoek meestal uitgevoerd naar een specifiek televisiegenre zoals fictie, reality, specifieke religieuze programma's of een geselecteerd aantal genres. Op grond van literatuurstudie concluderen wij dat eerdere studies naar de morele inhoud van televisie grotendeels gericht zijn op één enkel genre, of een selectief aantal genres, en dat zij deze inhoud beschreven hebben via deductief afgeleide aspecten van moraal, zoals probleemoplossingen, normschendingen en antisociaal gedrag. Hieruit rijst een beeld op van moraal op televisie als een verbrokkeld verschijnsel, zonder duidelijk verband omdat een eenduidige conceptualisering ontbreekt. Dit gegeven noodzaakte ons tot een open exploratie van de televisie-inhoud van primetime programma's, om een samenhangend beeld te kunnen verkrijgen van het alledaagse aanbod aan moraal op de Nederlandse televisie gericht op een breed publiek. Deze dissertatie heeft dan ook als doel te beschrijven hoe moraal op primetime televisie eruitziet en dat gebeurt aan de hand van drie onderzoeksvragen:

- Welke typen moraal zijn er aanwezig op de Nederlandse primetime televisie?
- Welke verschillen en overeenkomsten zijn er te ontdekken tussen de verschillende televisiegenres op de Nederlandse primetime televisie?
- Zijn er veranderingen te ontdekken in de representatie van moraal op primetime televisie door de tijd heen?

Om deze vragen te beantwoorden is dit proefschrift opgebouwd uit drie verschillende exploratieve studies, afgewisseld met reflecties op ontwikkelde concepten en gebruikte meetinstrumenten. Deze worden achtereenvolgens besproken.

In de eerste studie in dit proefschrift (Hoofdstuk 2) was het doel om door middel van kwalitatieve inhoudsanalyse zicht te krijgen op de morele inhoud van een (geconstrueerde) avond primetime televisie en de verschillende soorten moraal te beschrijven. Het beginpunt van deze exploratie was een *sensitizing concept* van moraal, gebaseerd op de literatuur, waarbij drie variaties (formeel, informeel en intuïtief) werden onderscheiden (Verplaetse, 2008; WRR, 2003). Het onderzoeksmateriaal van de eerste studie bestond uit een geconstrueerde avond van 24 programma's uitgezonden op de Nederlandse primetime televisie. Na systematische vergelijking vonden we 13 verschillende vormen van moraal – vier specificaties van de formele moraal (*justitiële moraal*, *economische moraal*, *professionele moraal* en *politieke moraal*), twee typen moraal die aspecten van formele en informele moraal combineren (*consumentenmoraal* en *zorgmoraal*), vier

specificaties van de informele moraal (*fatsoensmoraal*, *kennismoraal*, *spelmoraal* en *iconische moraal*), en drie typen van de intuïtieve moraal (*hechttingsmoraal*, *samenwerkingsmoraal* en *geweldsmoraal*). Wij lieten ook een basaal onderscheid zien tussen typen moraal als reactie op normschendingen, gericht op het inperken van gedrag (als normen), en vormen van moraal geijkt op abstracte waarden of idealen, die ruimte geven aan gedrag (zie ook: WRR, 2003). Als laatste ontdekten we drie morele metathema's die weerspiegeld werden in alle genres, terwijl er ook zes genrespecifieke morele thema's werden ontdekt. De morele metathema's waren: *Familie is de hoeksteen van de samenleving*; *Veiligheid, orde en rechtvaardigheid zijn de basis van een geordende samenleving* en *Gezondheid is rijkdom*.

Genreclusters vertoonden zoals gezegd een moreel discours waarin genrespecifieke nuances zichtbaar werden. In het genrecluster nieuws & informatie articuleerden wij twee specifieke dominante morele thema's: *Eer moet gekoesterd en verdedigd worden* en *Geïnformeerd burgerschap is de sleutel tot de democratie*. Aan de hand van de resultaten voor het genrecluster entertainment & reality televisie lieten wij drie morele thema's zien: *Consumptie leidt tot het goede leven*, *Vriendelijkheid, solidariteit en beleefdheid zijn de lijm die de samenleving bij elkaar houdt* en *Je moet spelen volgens de regels van het spel*. Als laatste bevatte het genrecluster fictie één terugkerend moreel thema: *Vrienden zijn een gekozen familie*.

We concludeerden aan het einde van de eerste studie dat televisie, met een diversiteit aan genres en programmatypen, een rijk aanbod bevat aan moraal, zowel in termen van relevante maatschappelijke thema's en problemen als in termen van alledaags gedrag. Daarnaast blijkt dat bepaalde morele metathema's en verschillende typen moraal ritueel worden herhaald. Het lijkt erop dat televisie-inhouden voortdurend de kern communiceren betreffende wat we als samenleving het meest belangrijk en waardevol zouden moeten vinden. De metathema's kunnen gezien worden als mythes die de samenleving zichzelf verteld en aanleert, of zoals Lule (2001) ze definieerde als de "eternal stories" van de samenleving.

De overkoepelende doelstelling van dit proefschrift is het onderzoeken van de aard en kenmerken van moraal in primetime televisie. Om dat doel te kunnen bereiken moesten we codeerinstrumenten ontwikkelen om de diversiteit en de variabele frequentie van elementen van moraal te kunnen vastleggen. In Hoofdstuk 3 zijn de achtergronden besproken van de codeerinstrumenten die zijn gebruikt in de studies die zijn verslagen in Hoofdstuk 4 tot en met Hoofdstuk 7. Twee ontwikkelingen waren daarbij van belang: proefonderzoeken naar de presentie van de moraal in reclame en in verband met geldigheidsoverwegingen

theoretische overwegingen betreffende het verder ontwikkelen van het begrip moraal.

Een van de bevindingen van de kwalitatieve studie in Hoofdstuk 2 was dat moraal in televisie inhoud zowel naar voren komt door problemen en overtredingen te tonen, maar ook door de betreffende gedragingen te bespreken, oplossingen te presenteren of te ver-/beoordelen. Dat onderscheid bleek ook voor reclame te werken: naast de algemene boodschap over het product of merk is er een boodschap over een tekort of een probleem op het niveau van de getoonde personen en personages. Daarom moesten in verband met de geldigheid van de meetinstrumenten deze beide niveaus in het waarnemingsinstrument opgenomen worden.

Voor het onderzoek van reclame probeerden we de producten en merken te beschrijven aan de hand van het *Good Life*-thema uit de kwalitatieve studie, gericht op de levensdomeinen die daarbij van belang zijn. Door afwisselend uit te proberen en te herdefiniëren kwamen we tot 11 domeincategorieën, waarmee 97% van de producten, merken of problemen uit de reclame konden worden geordend. Omdat waarden één van de meer rechtstreekse elementen van moraal zijn, kozen we ervoor om waardencategorieën op een inductieve manier uit te werken. Het resultaat was duidelijk maar ook teleurstellend, de grote meerderheid van boodschappen in de reclamespotjes (meer dan 75%) bevatte de waarde functionaliteit (in al haar varianten). We concludeerden daarom dat we weliswaar een betrouwbaar instrument hadden ontwikkeld, maar dat het niet effectief was om meer algemene maatschappelijke waarden te traceren. Functionaliteit was een overkoepelende waarde geworden die in reclames bijna altijd wel traceerbaar is aan de hand van haar vele varianten, maar die voor de genres als nieuws of entertainment veel minder of niet relevant zijn. Deze uitkomst was aanleiding voor een nieuwe reflectiefase waarin het perspectief op moraal zowel methodisch als theoretisch nader moest worden uitgewerkt.

Eén van de andere conclusies van de eerste kwalitatieve studie naar moraal op primetime televisie was dat de drie aanvankelijk geformuleerde typen moraal (formeel, informeel, intuïtief) niet geheel de uitgewerkte subtypen dekten en dat ook de intuïtieve moraal niet goed naar voren kwam. We zochten dan ook naar een meer abstracte benadering van soorten moraal die de diversiteit aan morele vormen beter kon weergeven. Geïnspireerd door een publicatie van de Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid (WRR) over de relatie tussen waarden, normen en gedrag (2003), zijn we aan de slag gegaan met de door Tipton (2002) geformuleerde typen of stijlen van morele evaluatie. Zijn indeling van morele evaluatiestijlen is verbonden met instituties en sociale praktijken. We hebben deze indeling verder uitgewerkt in vier verschillende typen moraal: Gezag, Regulatief, Markt en Expressieve Moraal. Deze typen hebben we toegepast in de inhoudsanalyses van de Hoofdstukken 4 en 6.

Op basis hiervan en op basis van de in de eerste studie uitgewerkte moraaltypen hebben wij ons centrale begrip moraal verder geoperationaliseerd: als variabelen in termen van de elementen Moreel Thema, Morele Gemeenschap, Levensdomein en Morele Complexiteit en op het niveau van de individuele handelende persoon of personage de Morele Aard, Morele Overtreding en Gevolgen (belonen, bestraffen etc.). Het aldus uitgewerkte perspectief op moraal (de uitgewerkte vorm staat in de bijlagen II en III) is toegepast in twee exploratieve, kwantitatieve vervolgprojecten. In het ene project stellen we vragen naar verandering in typen moraal in fictie over de afgelopen 25 jaar en of er sprake is van morele complexiteit. In het andere project stellen we de vraag of in verschillende televisiegenres dezelfde of juist verschillende typen moraal dominant zijn.

In de tweede exploratieve studie naar fictie en veranderingen in de tijd (Hoofdstuk 4 en 5), bouwden we verder op de resultaten van de eerste studie door te kiezen voor een focus op morele pluraliteit in termen van Tipton (2002), die de moraaltypen verbindt met sociale instituties. Bovendien bleek uit de eerste studie dat in de verschillende morele gemeenschappen verschillende morele eisen worden gesteld aan de leden, wat een extra focus geeft op de evaluatie van gedrag. Als televisie wordt gezien als één van de voornaamste overdragers van de kernwaarden in de samenleving, dan roept dat de vraag op of de representatie van moraal op televisie is meegegaan met sociale veranderingsprocessen als individualisering, institutionalisering en secularisatie (Den Hoed & Schuyt, 2004; Tipton, 2002; Zijdeveld, 2000). In deze tweede exploratieve studie werd dan ook de vraag verkend of de morele inhoud van de verhalen (in termen van typen, gemeenschappen, thema's, domeinen en complexiteit) en moreel gedrag (wie, welk gedrag, overtredingen, bestraffingen) in de afgelopen 25 jaar is veranderd.

Uit de resultaten van deze studie blijkt dat de dominante morele thema's: Orde, veiligheid en rechtvaardigheid; Liefde en romantiek en het Huwelijk en familieproblemen waren. *Problemen van de georganiseerde samenleving* (35%) en van *Verwantschap & identiteit* (34%) en *Liefde en romantiek* (24%) komen het meest voor. De veranderingspatronen in de representatie van morele thema's in de tijd bevatten een afwisseling van deze thema's, maar noemenswaardig is de toename van het thema *Problemen van vrijheid & zelfexpressie* (van 10% naar 25%). Deze resultaten werden ook gespiegeld in de morele domeinen, waar door de tijd heen en over het geheel gezien de drie domeinen Familie (35%), Justitie (25%) en Vrije tijd, Romantiek & Vriendschap (20%) dominant waren. We zien dat de meest dominante gemeenschap de Niet-gekozen gemeenschap blijkt te zijn, dit is de samenleving als geheel als een morele gemeenschap. Het meest

voorkomende type moraal was de expressieve moraal, zowel in het algemeen als door de tijd heen gezien, wat in lijn lijkt met de belangrijke rol van *problemen met vrijheid & zelfexpressie*. Desalniettemin constateren we dat in de meeste verhalen meerdere typen moraal worden gepresenteerd, vooral Expressieve moraal (68% van de verhaallijnen), Gezagsmoraal (55%) en Regulatieve moraal (48%). Onze resultaten geven ons aanleiding te concluderen dat door de tijd heen de fictionele televisieverhalen meer complex zijn geworden (cf. Dant, 2012; Johnson, 2005a, 2005b; Mittell, 2006).

Op het niveau van moreel gedrag constateren we dat er een sterke stijging te zien is van het aantal moreel ambivalente personages. Slechte personages (circa 5%) zijn gekarakteriseerd door overtredingen van de wet, terwijl moreel ambivalente personages (in de tijd variërend tussen 50-75 % van de personages) voornamelijk sociale normschendingen begaan (zoals pesten, liegen, bedriegen, vloeken, vulgair gedrag). Toch wordt de overgrote meerderheid van alle normschendingen bestraft, waarmee de morele les voor de kijker lijkt te zijn dat dit soort gedrag afgekeurd moet worden. Door de tijd heen zien we dat in zowel de Amerikaanse als de Nederlandse fictieverhalen een toename van moreel ambivalente personages (tot 75% in 2005), al lijkt deze trend na 2010 te veranderen (< 60%). Het patroon in andere buitenlandse fictie blijkt veel grilliger wat betreft de aanwezigheid van deze personages door de tijd heen. De cast van fictie laat, in het algemeen, een weinig veranderde oververtegenwoordiging van mannen en volwassenen zien, vergelijkbaar met eerder onderzoek (zie bijvoorbeeld, Emons et al., 2010; Segijn et al., 2014; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). Wat betreft de typering van de morele aard zien we dat vrouwelijke personages relatief vaker gecast worden als het goede personage en mannelijke personages als het slechte personage, terwijl morele ambivalentie bij zowel mannen als vrouwen domineert.

In de laatste exploratieve studie van deze dissertatie (Hoofdstuk 6 en 7) was de focus gericht op een verkenning van genreverschillen in verband met representatie van moraal. Ook in deze studie combineren we het uitgangspunt van morele pluraliteit in de vorm van de moraaltypen (cf. Tipton, 2002), met een verkenning van moraal zowel op het niveau van morele inhoud als op het niveau van het vertoonde gedrag en eventuele genreverschillen hierin. De assumptie dat in televisiegenres mogelijk verschillende wereldvisies worden gecultiveerd, inspireerde ons tot de centrale vraag *welke verschillen zijn er tussen genres in representatie van moraal?*

In de resultaten kunnen we op niveau van de inhoud van moraal specifieke genreverschillen aantonen. Met betrekking tot morele thema's blijken *Problemen van de georganiseerde samenleving* in alle genres te domineren (van 35% tot 54% van de programma's in het betreffende genre); het meest in het nieuws & infor-

matiegenre. Daarnaast zijn er verschillen tussen genres geconstateerd: bij entertainment is er een significante plek bestemd voor thema's gerelateerd aan marktrelaties (23%). Bij zowel entertainment (22%) als fictie (29%) spelen thema's gerelateerd aan Vrijheid & zelfexpressie een grote rol. Bij fictie zijn daarnaast ook thema's gerelateerd aan Verwantschap & identiteit prominent aanwezig (30%).

Wat betreft de dominantie van levensdomeinen per genre, zien we dat Politiek dominant is in het nieuwsgenre (24%), Cultuur, Kunst en Media in het entertainmentgenre (35%) en Familie in het fictiegenre (37%). De meest dominante gemeenschap blijkt in alle genres de Traditionele gemeenschap (variërend tussen 69-92%). Daarvan kunnen we zeggen dat die gemeenschap het algemeen belang van de samenleving vertegenwoordigt. Daarnaast wordt ook duidelijk dat, in tegenstelling tot fictie, in een derde van de nieuwsitems en een vijfde van de entertainmentitems geen moraal aanwezig is, dat wil zeggen dat ze alleen neutrale, feitelijke informatie bevatten. In zowel fictie (71%) als entertainment (52%) is de Expressieve moraal het meest dominant aanwezig, terwijl dit voor nieuws en informatie de Regulatieve moraal (57%) is. Maar het meest opvallende resultaat is dat in elk genre meerdere moraaltypen voorkomen: het nieuwsgenre representeerde zowel de Regulatieve moraal (56.8%) als de Markt moraal (31%) en de Expressieve moraal (32%), het entertainmentgenre toonde de Expressieve moraal (51.7%), evenals de Marktmoraal (35%) en de Regulatieve moraal (34%). In het fictiegenre was er naast de Expressieve moraal (70.5%) oog voor de Gezagsmoraal (56%) en de Regulatieve moraal (35%). In een derde van de verhalen / items is dan ook sprake van morele complexiteit, in het fictiegenre is dat aandeel beduidend groter (63%).

Met betrekking tot het morele gedrag, zijn de resultaten dat ambivalente personages overheersen in het fictiegenre (50%), terwijl moreel neutrale personen zowel in het nieuws- en informatiegenre (86%) als in het entertainmentgenre (58%) domineren. In alle genres worden moreel ambivalente personen en personages getypeerd door sociale of professionele overtredingen en de moreel slechte personen/personages juist door wettelijke overtredingen. In het nieuwsgenre komen de moreel slechte personen naar voren als overtreeders van de wet en hebben ambivalente personen professionele of sociale regels overtreden. In het entertainmentgenre komen relatief vaak goede personen voor die een professionele overtreding hebben begaan, slechte personen die de wet overtraden, en ambivalente personen die een professionele of sociale regel hebben geschonden. In fictie worden de slechte personages getypeerd door overtreding van de wet en de goede of ambivalente personages door overtreding van sociale regels. Tweederde van alle overtredingen wordt bestraft, waarbij moreel slechte personages of personen altijd worden bestraft en moreel ambivalente personen of personages relatief vaker weggelaten worden zonder gevolgen. Desalniettemin wordt de grote

meerderheid van alle wettelijke normschendingen bestraft, waarmee de morele les voor overtreders en kijkers lijkt te zijn dat dit soort gedrag niet alleen wordt afgekeurd maar ook wordt bestraft.

Wat betreft de typering van de morele aard worden vrouwelijke personages relatief vaker gecast als moreel goede personages in de genres fictie en entertainment, en voor mannen is dat bij nieuws en informatieprogramma's het geval. Leeftijd speelt ook een rol: volwassenen worden geassocieerd met morele ambivalentie, zowel in fictie als in entertainment, en met slechtheid in fictie. Daarnaast was morele neutraliteit dominant voor alle leeftijdscategorieën, behalve in het fictiegenre. Met betrekking tot etniciteit komen in de resultaten opmerkelijke verschillen naar voren aan tussen de genres. Nieuws kent voornamelijk neutrale personen voor alle etniciteiten (82-91%). Bij het entertainment-genre komen minder neutrale en meer goede personen voor, maar voor bijna alle etniciteiten is dat samen ongeveer 80% van de personages. Opvallend is hier het relatief grote aantal zwarten dat als ambivalent wordt gepresenteerd (31%). In het fictiegenre zijn vooral witte (49%) en zwarte personages (43%) ambivalent.

Deze dissertatie heeft als doel om in kaart te brengen hoe moraal op de Nederlandse primetime televisie naar voren komt. Om aard en kenmerken van moraal te reconstrueren zijn drie exploratieve studies uitgevoerd naar diverse typen moraal, verschillen tussen genres en veranderingen in de tijd. Deze studies hebben ons in een cumulatief proces van vergelijken, ontdekken en reflectie tot een samenhangend beeld geleid van wat moraal op tv inhoudt als begrip en als empirisch verschijnsel. De morele kern van de televisieboodschappen verwijst naar het terrein van de georganiseerde samenleving: Justitie, Orde en Veiligheid doortrekt alle genres. Deze morele kern van het boodschapsysteem van televisie is een reëel verschijnsel dat in al onze studies naar voren is gekomen, en dat ook in onderzoek van anderen is opgemerkt. Moraal varieert daarnaast over genres, maar moraal is niet per definitie aanwezig, bijvoorbeeld in nieuwsitems kan het ontbreken; fictie blijkt het meest 'morele' genre te zijn, moraal is daarin altijd aanwezig.

De vier verschillende typen moraal zijn divers verdeeld over de genres, de Regulatieve moraal domineert en is van enige afstand gezien als het ware in discussie met de andere typen moraal; bij fictie gaat het vooral om de Expressieve moraal en de Gezagsmoraal. Moraal op televisie is complex in de zin dat er meerdere typen moraal ofwel naast elkaar staan, dan wel met elkaar conflicteren. Door de eenduidige conceptualisering is het begrip moraal ook in analytische zin complex. Moraal op televisie is complex in de zin dat het morele boodschappen bevat over het belang van bepaalde onderwerpen en problemen, het belang van bepaalde levensdomeinen en de juiste en conflicterende morele stijlen, en

bovendien waarden en normen waarvan de overtreding moet worden bestraft. Daarbij gaat het niet om een universele morele boodschap van één type, maar om morele stijlen die op televisie voortdurend met elkaar in discussie zijn. Het is daarom aannemelijk dat primetime televisie met zijn diversiteit aan morele thema's en morele domeinen in de samenleving functioneert als een platform voor reflectie, waarop de cultuur in discussie is met zichzelf.

In tegenstelling tot de veel gehoorde visie dat televisie het morele verval stimuleert, komen wij tot de conclusie dat het primetime televisieaanbod het belang van enkele centrale morele opvattingen voortdurend aan de orde stelt en benadrukt dat overtredingen moeten worden bestraft. De metafoor van het forum komt nog duidelijker naar voren wanneer meerdere typen moraal tegelijkertijd in een programma aanwezig zijn. Desondanks blijkt uit de inventarisatie van oordelen door de morele gemeenschap, als een wezenlijk kenmerk van het begrip moraal, dat het in Nederlandse primetime televisie voornamelijk gaat om de morele gemeenschap van de samenleving als geheel.

Een thema voor vervolgonderzoek is de vraag hoe aspecten van morele inhoud en de personen en personages en hun gedragingen met elkaar samenhangen. Met andere woorden, hoe personen van verschillende morele aard zijn verdeeld over morele thema's en domeinen, en welke opvattingen samengaan met de wijze waarop de morele aard van de personen is weergegeven. Daarmee krijgen we meer zicht op hoe morele complexiteit in gedrag is uitgewerkt en hoe moreel belang in elk genre wordt gecommuniceerd.

Dankwoord

Het dankwoord van mijn eerste masterscriptie begon ik met de woorden: *“The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same. Yet our lessons come from the journey, not the destination.”* (Don Williams, Jr). Deze woorden blijken ook nu weer zeer toepasselijk. Mijn passie voor wetenschap is aangewakkerd tijdens mijn studies Communicatiewetenschap en Amerikanistiek, met dank aan de vele inspirerende docenten die mij daarmee op de weg naar een dissertatie over televisie en moraliteit hebben gezet. Nu het einde van dit pad in zicht is en er zich allemaal nieuwe interessante paden voor mij ontvouwen, is een moment van dankbaarheid en reflectie op zijn plaats.

Allereerst wil ik graag Ellen en Fred bedanken voor hun begeleiding, advies en kennis die mij in staat hebben gesteld deze dissertatie te maken en af te ronden. De korte lijn met Ellen zorgde ervoor dat ik op dagelijkse contactmomenten en adviezen kon rekenen, en de kennis en pragmatische inslag van Fred zorgde ervoor dat er knopen doorgehakt werden waar nodig. Bedankt dat jullie ervoor zorgden dat ik dit pad bewandelen mocht!

Ik was nooit gekomen waar ik nu ben zonder de steun, inspiratie, advies en gezelligheid van mijn collega's. Lunch, koffie en andere gezellige momenten maakten het werken op de universiteit als een warm bad. Een aantal van mijn collega's verdienen echter een bijzonder woord van dank. Merel, bedankt voor je sprankelende en inspirerende aanwezigheid, je gezelschap bij al onze koffie, je betrokkenheid en onze super-samenwerking. Mariska, mijn Ph.D. buddy van de oude stempel, bedankt voor al je tips en trucs in het overleven van een proefschrift, onze gezamenlijke projecten en je altijd oprechte betrokkenheid voor alles wat er in mijn leven gebeurde. Allison, thanks for inspiring me, believing in my research potential and our collaborations, and for being a great mentor and friend. En Addy, bedankt dat je me zo hebt geïnspireerd dat ik de wetenschap in wilde en me altijd het idee hebt gegeven dat ik dit gewoon kon.

Verder verdienen ook mijn vriendinnen mijn eeuwige dank, zonder jullie afleiding, steun en positiviteit had ik dit project nooit succesvol af kunnen ronden. Dus Janneke J., Conny, Els, Rosalie, Noor, Femke, Janneke M., en Anja: dank jullie wel!! Twee vriendinnen verdienen het om extra in het zonnetje gezet te worden: mijn paranimfen Aagje en Annemarie. Annemarie, ik vind het prachtig dat we elkaar gevonden hebben tijdens het allereerste college Inleiding in de Communicatiewetenschap en elkaar nooit meer kwijt zijn geraakt. Je bent er vanaf toen altijd voor me geweest en kent me van binnen en buiten. Dank voor alles en super dat je mijn paranimf wilt zijn. Aagje, ook onze levens raakten verwekt in de collegebanken en ook wij hadden nooit kunnen voorspellen waar het ons allemaal samen zou brengen. Ook jij was er voor het mooie en

moeilijke in het leven, en was er altijd met humor, oprechte adviezen en een luisterend oor daar waar nodig was. Dank voor je loyaliteit, oprechtheid en humor, en natuurlijk dat je me bij wilt staan als paranimf.

Ook onmisbaar op het pad dat ik bewandeld heb, is mijn familie. Pappa en Marion, bedankt voor jullie steun, advies en jullie onophoudelijke geloof in mijn kunnen. Ria†, Vincent, Hetty, Bart, Floor, Chris, Lisette, Oma Jacky en alle mini-Lauretten, bedankt voor jullie betrokkenheid, interesse en de nodige afleiding in dit proces. Als allerlaatste en allerbelangrijkste, mijn dank aan Mathijs en Olivia. Bedankt voor de onvoorwaardelijke liefde, steun en de rust van een warme thuishaven zonder welke dit alles niet mogelijk was geweest.

Serena Daalmans
Nijmegen, september 2016

Curriculum Vitae

Serena Daalmans was born on October 11, 1984 in Maastricht, The Netherlands. She studied Communication Science (Msc, 2007, *cum laude*) and American Studies (Msc, 2008, *cum laude*) at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. Due to her passion for science, she wanted to become a Ph.D. student and strive to obtain het doctoral degree. In January 2009, she started as a Ph.D. in Communication Science at the Radboud University. During her Ph.D. trajectory, Serena worked as a lecturer within the bachelor program of American Studies as well as within the Communication Science bachelor and master program at Radboud University. She was also involved as a supervisor of research projects within the Honours Programs of the Faculty of Arts. Serena's research has been published in several communication journals, including *Media Psychology*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* and *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap*. At present, she works as a lecturer and researcher at Radboud University Nijmegen.

